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KASHMIR

Hindu, Buddhist & Muslim Architecture

MANOHAR KAUL

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Ved Mansion, 72, Janpath, New Delhi-1.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Trends in Indian Painting

—Ancient. Medieval. Modern

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सत्यमेव जयते

पर्यटन तथा नागर विमानन मंत्री
MINISTER OF TOURISM & CIVIL AVIATION

The architecture of Kashmir is impressive, both in its grandeur and in its variety. Having been one of the crucibles of religious integration, Kashmir has the unique distinction of having through the centuries cradled Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam with a minimum of conflict, and is today a shining example of communal harmony and understanding. The rich architectural heritage of Kashmir has not of late received adequate attention, and to the best of my knowledge there has not been a major work on this since Pandit Ram Chandra Kak's pioneering effort in the early thirties. I am glad that the author of this book has undertaken an illustrated study of the varied art and architecture of Kashmir which will be of interest to the layman and tourist. More scholarly works on various aspects of this important facet of our national heritage are necessary, but the present volume provides a valuable introduction.

Karan Singh

New Delhi,
November 12, 1971

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A specimen of Tiles excavated at Harwan

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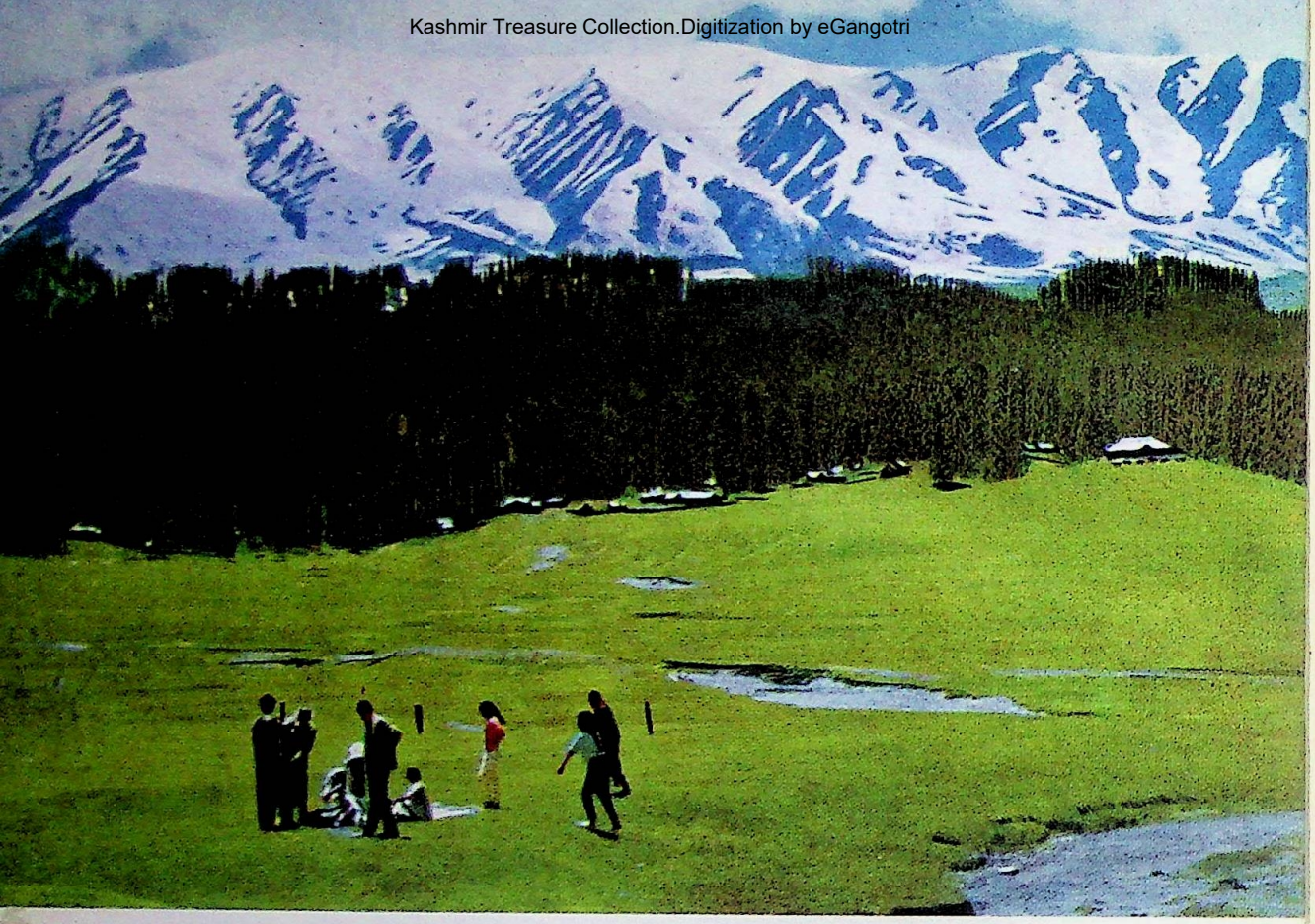

Gulmarg—Nature's Architype

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PREFACE

This profusely illustrated monograph on the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Muslim Architecture in Kashmir valley is the first in the 'Indian Culture Series' being brought out from the viewpoint of an uninitiated man who hitherto was deprived of the aesthetic bounties of our ancient cultural heritage. With apologies to the connoisseur, the high-brow an effort has been made to focus the attention of the visitor and the art student to the much-forsaken places of the country, which are of cultural value and are milestones in our ancient history. The progressive mind will find new names of places of interest where he can easily reach and find in stone the history of his past, speaking to him, as it were, in lucid and comprehensible language about the grandeur that India has been.

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Art, whatever its field, is no longer a monopoly of the elite for enjoyment, but has to be a source of edification to the general public. With this object in view, the present work has been brought out and others will follow in the series. I shall feel rewarded if it interests its reader, as it has been written for him in a lucid style.

I am grateful to the Archaeological Survey of India for providing me the photographs and to the Photo Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for lending me four colour transparencies of Nishat, Shalimar, Chashma-i-Shahi and Gulmarg. I am also thankful to Shri Prem Sagar of Sagar Publications for cooperating whole-heartedly in producing this book to my expectations. I am also beholden to many friends who assisted me in this work.

Last but not the least, I am highly grateful to Shri Brahama Datta Bhargava, Chairman, Oxford Printcraft India Private Limited, who spared no pains in achieving excellent production results.

—Manohar Kaul

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INTRODUCTION

The Land and its People

Anyone looking at the map of the vast Himalayan region is sure to find many delightful valleys and picturesque spots. These are set among the high mountain ranges having salubrious climate, serene atmosphere, fresh water reserves, charming environs and soul enchanting views.

Kashmir excells among all these not only geographically but also in its history, culture and artistic pursuits. It is one of the most beautiful and fertile valleys in the world. Jawaharlal Nehru has said about the vale of Kashmir, "Like some supremely beautiful woman whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such is Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of rivers, valleys, lakes and graceful trees. And then another aspect of this magic beauty comes into view, a masculine one, of hard mountains and precipices, snowcapped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below."

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Irregularly oval in shape, the valley is over 84 miles by 25 miles in expanse with almost a uniform height of over five thousand feet above the sea level. Kashmir is encircled by the high mountain ranges of Karakoram and the Himalayas; the highest peak being Nanga Parbat (26,620 ft.) in the north of the Wular lake. There is holy Amarnath (17,320 ft.) and Harmukh (16,900 ft.) on the Gangabal lake. On the south is the famous Pirpanchal range (15,000 ft.) and on the west lies the Kazi Nag (12,125 ft.). It has hardly any interrupting or intersecting ridges anywhere and has been capable of maintaining a homogeneous people of Aryan origin in one vast stretch of land in the valley and in the side-valleys, though the surrounding hilly regions are inhabited by people of differing ethnic groups.

Mostly belonging to Aryan race, Kashmiris are handsome and sturdy people. Some ancient Aryan traits are even now discernible in the well-cut features of the Kashmiri Pandits. The Kashmiris are intelligent and the beautiful aspects of Kashmir's nature has bestowed upon them extraordinary artistic skill. The Kashmiri women are very pretty with well-shaped features. Their figures are graceful. Kashmir's feminine beauty, proverbial in the east, seldom fails to impress the aesthetic eye.

In its chequered history, though Kashmir received one influence after another, its people preserved their unity and culture. "The narrowness of the geographical horizon—the Kashmiri

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A figure sculptured on the wall of the Martand temple

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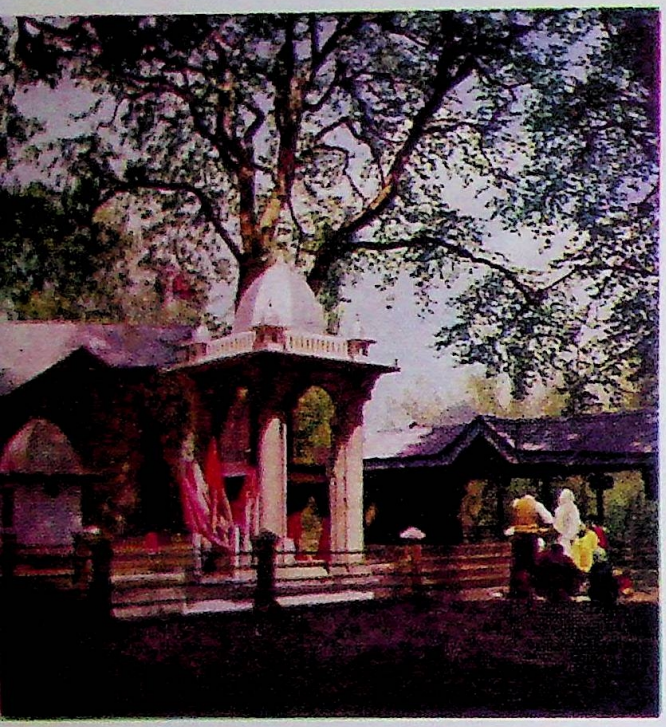
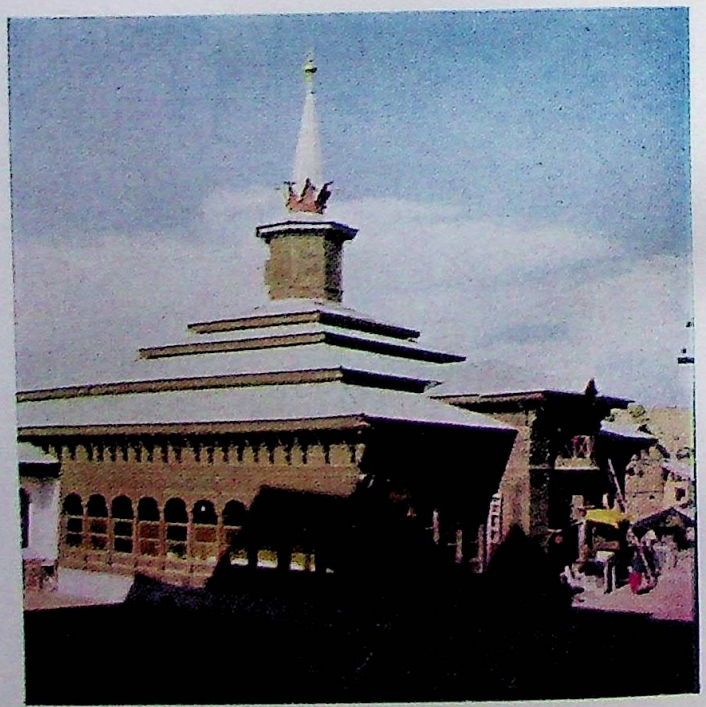


Kheer Bhawani



Tsrare-Sharif

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could see his whole world from the roof of his house—is largely responsible for moulding his character which has remained unaltered for many centuries". Kashmir was the scene of many invasions and it got influences of various civilizations and cultures which due to tremendous powers of adaptability and adjustment of Kashmiris got happily mingled. "Like an ocean, Kashmir received the tribute of a thousand rivers, and like an ocean again, though perturbed for a while on the surface, absorbed and assimilated these varied currents into its own culture, weaving out new patterns of synthesis and harmony. One often marvels how deep rooted and vital, have been these unifying tendencies in Kashmir's cultural set-up, in spite of the conflicts of race, religion, caste, creed and language which appear to the superficial eye to divide the land and its people." Kashmir is in fact a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. Both the communities pay reverence to the religious leaders of each other. There are many shrines in the valley which are visited by both the communities for offering prayers and getting their wishes fulfilled. The famous mosque of Shah Hamdan and the shrine of Nund Rishi at *Tsrare-Sharif* is sacred both to the Hindus and the Muslims. *Khir Bhawani*, a Hindu shrine is similarly sacred to Muslims who do not enter the premises of the shrine without having ablutions. According to a Hindu legend King Zain-ul-Abidin is said to have taken a pious pilgrimage to the Hindu shrine of Amarnath.

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Kashmir had been a land of multiple attractions, drawing like a magnet people of all tastes and views to realize their pet objective. In ancient times it was a *Topographia Sacra* or the holiland of pilgrimage for the Hindu and the Buddhist faiths as well as the *Sharadapitha* or the seat of learning for all classes of scholars, seeking higher knowledge. The Mughals made it a pleasure and holiday resort and left their healthy impress in the many gardens and other monuments that all the more beautified the valley and added to its charming aspect. People in other walks of life, with different interests and proclivities, find ample satisfaction by even a brief sojourn to the celestial valley. Pearce Gervis says in his travelogue, "Then it was that I discovered it was truely a land of colour—the colour of nature in the valleys, the mountains, the lakes, with the sky contributing an overflow of shades. There the colours in the rainbow were swamped, only to be appreciated in the white of the mountain snows, though even there as one looked down with the valleys, all was colour again, blending together as only Mother Nature can paint them, changing with the sunrise, sunset and moonlight. Never have I seen such colour, and unless my eyes were to gaze upon them, never can I believe that they exist in any other place. Truely this is the artist's paradise."

Other valleys and beauty spots in the vast Himalayan region provide only this or that charming aspect, but Kashmir is par-excellence the

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Remnants of sculptures of Pandrethan temple

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Trimurti—a rare sculptural find at Gopkar excavation site, now housed in Srinagar Museum

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one place which is rich in each and every aspect of human interest. Kalhana has rightly observed "Kailasa is the best place in the three worlds; the Himalayas—the best part of Kailasa ; and Kashmir, the best part of the Himalayas."

Architectural Wealth

Architecture of Kashmir has attracted more attention from foreigners than that of any other place in India. The beauty of the valley has attracted tourists from all parts of the world, and its lush verdure, snow crusted mountain ramparts round the plains, bracing atmosphere, charming lakes and rivers and perfect climate induced them to linger on there. Naturally the most inquisitive among them found their leisure well spent in investigating the art treasures lying strewn in the valley. These architectural remains have drawn the attention of many European savants from early 19th century to investigate and study the subject in their travelogues and monographs, though the conclusions of some of them were found faulty by later investigations.

The first to investigate were Moorcraft and Trebeck in 1819-24, followed by G.T. Vigne in 1833, who also drew the plans of the monuments and apportioned the probable dates of their construction, and Baron Hugal of the same time, who simply recorded his impressions. In 1848, General A. Cunningham published his illustrated monograph in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" on the architecture of Kashmir with

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plans and other details, and a supplement to this was published in 1866 in the same journal by Rev. W. C. Cowie, Chaplain on duty in Kashmir. He described some more old temples that had escaped the attention of his predecessors. In 1868, Lt. Cole, Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, along with his staff, made a fresh survey of the valley, drew fresh plans and other architectural details along with his new photographs which have been since much useful in the study of the style.

The latest investigations conducted by the local archaeologist, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak, have put to rest all the controversial issues advanced so far as the age of this or that monument and other relevant matters. Arthur Neve has said that "Ancient India has nothing more worthy of its early civilization than the grand remains of Kashmir."

The recorded history shows that Kashmir was a part of the far-flung empire of Asoka in 272-232 B.C. and of the Kushan kings of Gandhara, Kanishka and Huvishka, whose kingdom extended from Patna to Kashgar and Yarkand in Central Asia in 200 A.D. Kashmir also had come under the devastating influence of Toramana and Mihirakula, the white Hun invaders of Northern India in the fifth century A.D. Though Asoka's Satrap in Kashmir had founded the city of Srinagar at Pandrethan, three miles above its present site, it was effected by the local prince, Pravarsena II, in the latter half of the 6th century, who

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named it *Pravarapura* after his own name, which later on, with its extension under other local rulers of fame, resumed the old name of Srinagar, while the old site was called *Puranadhishtana* (old city) surviving in the corrupt name of *Pandrethan*. From the 6th to 13th century, Kashmir's authentic history shows a continuous progressive rule of local Hindu princes, some of whom were great builders and patrons of arts and letters and even credited with having accomplished laudable deeds of public utility and social service.

The Buddhist and the Hindu Architecture

The authentic historical records of Kashmir, not to speak of the traditional and bardic lore, clearly indicate that the valley was an important centre of the Buddhist faith even from the time of Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. and continued as such upto the 7th or the 8th century. Consequently this historical association must have exercised a tremendous cultural influence upon the architecture and other arts of the valley. No structural monuments prior to the christian era have survived in the valley nor have we any wholesome examples of even the first few snatches and bits, made available by recent archaeological exploration. But the rich collection of numismatic, ceramic and sculptured pieces and other relics of the Indo-Greek, Parthian and Saka kings and epochs unearthed in the valley, display a wealth of concrete evidence to show that sufficient and continuous commercial and cultural intercourse

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and even political connection existed between Kashmir and the Western Kingdom of Gandhara which was Greek inspired and Buddhist in character and outlook.

The pre-Buddhist art in Kashmir, for lack of any concrete evidence beyond literary notices, will, however, remain a mystery for a long time to come. But the art in Kashmir had its continuous and unbroken history from the Mauryan heyday to the present time.

There is, therefore, sufficient raison d'etre to posit that the Buddhist arts, as they emerged from the time of Asoka and developed in subsequent centuries under the Gandhara impact, had left indelible impression upon the character and nature of those in Kashmir. Both the Buddhist and the Hindu arts in the valley were simultaneously affected by this long-drawn-out contact with the Gandhara School giving them a homogeneous look as far as the general design and technique and the material used were concerned, with of course, some variations in certain details necessitated by the religious requirements of each faith or local conditions and requirements.

The Buddhist art in Kashmir, though profoundly affected by the later Gandhara School, had inherited the long traditions of the previous epochs in the Sub-continent and seem to have adhered to their old models allowing some innovations in the matter of decoration and the use of better material or evolving of better technique for its use.

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The remains of the Buddhist monuments discovered in recent years at Harwan and Ushkar, and those found earlier in other sites reveal interesting facts about the material used in the Buddhist architecture at different sites in the valley in different epochs. At Harwan, for instance, besides huge round boulders, only pebbly rubble was available and was pressed into service in building the masonary walls of monasteries, stupas, and other structures, while at Ushkar, where chip-stone was available in local quarries, chip-masonary was used with excellent results. At other places, where available, building-stone was employed with equally good effect. But in plan and structural design and elevation, conventional traditions in vogue in other parts of India were usually followed in the valley too.

There are two styles of temple architecture in the valley which belong to medieval epoch between 600 A.D. and 1300 A.D.—a few Buddhist and more numerous Hindu monuments. They are almost alike in many respects other than plan and elevation in which they differ because of the differing requirements of their faiths. The Buddhist preferred to stick to old models and employed better building material and more complex system of decoration than the Hindus.

Grey lime-stone properly dressed and polished and often beautifully carved was used in construction. The plinth of the old stupa was rectangular which got replaced with a square one with offsets on sides, protruding into the

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courtyard and side wall, decorated with sculptured reliefs. In larger structures double-terraced platforms served as plinths. In raising each terrace, some stone courses were plain and some decorated with round torus moulding and the top-most course with cyma recta. Most of such Buddhist monuments are in ruined fragments and no detailed structural plan and design could be determined. No ruins of any stupa were found and so the external decoration of the stupa remains yet to be determined.

Excavations at Parihasapura or Divar, some fourteen miles from Srinagar on road to Baramulla have yielded the remains of a monastery, a stupa and a *chaitya*, built some time in 750 A.D. The monastery is the usual cloistered quadrangle, full of cells or compartments each with an open varanda facing towards a rectangular courtyard. These cellular apartments served all purposes of a Buddhist monastic residence. A central room served as entrance and exit, another as vestibule, a third as refractory and so on. Walls, both internally and externally were plain.

The only Buddhist *chaitya* or temple existing in ruins at Parihasapura, show it to be a square chamber raised on a square base and enclosed by a wall. A flight of steps at the entrance gives excess to the portico which leads to sanctum in the middle of the room occupying a central square space enclosed by a screened wall with four columns at the four corners, and a corridor all round serving as a go-round passage.

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The portico stood on a massive trefoil arch, surmounted by a pedimental or pyramidal roof of which no trace has remained. So also might have been the roof of the temple over the sanctum like any other Hindu temple. Nothing of this has survived.

The Hindu Temple Architecture

The Hindu temple architecture in the Kashmir valley presents a singularly uniform style initiated and developed locally during the period between the 6th and the 13th century A.D. It presents certain elements and aspects that are akin to the classical style or the European art. That might have been due to the close contact with the Gandhara Kingdom in the early centuries through whom Western art forms and culture percolated throughout Northern India, including Kashmir.

According to V. Smith, most of the peculiarities of the Hindu temple architecture during the medieval time consisted of "pyramidal roof, gables, trefoil arches, and quasidoric columns."

The extant examples of medieval architecture show:

(i) Simplicity and unity of design.

(ii) Use of huge massive blocks of lime-stone and granite—well dressed and duly finished and often held together in structure by iron clamps, though mortar was also used in less quantity.

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(iii) Final dressing and carving was usually done in *situ* i.e., after the roughly dressed blocks were placed in their proper positions in construction.

(iv) The site selected for a temple was invariably to be one of the nature's beauty spots. The pyramidal ceiling was obtained by super-imposing progressively diminishing squares by cutting off the angles. The domical ceiling was obtained by super-imposing progressively diminishing concentric string-courses, with projection rims, the upper one falling flat upon the lower one and held together by an extraordinarily adhesive mortar. These circular string-courses were obtained from lime-concrete of great durability and strength like the modern blocks of cement-concrete. The third type, the corbelled ceiling is only a variant of the second type. Here the string-courses rise up supported on an elaborate system of corbelled pendentives. The usual pyramidal type consists in raising the pyramid from the leaves of the side-walls, upto which they are vertical, by contracting the concrete building material inwards by degrees and ending finally in a pinacle. In this case the hollow dome inside forms the ceiling.

The roofs are usually pyramidal surmounting the four walls of the main structure into a conical

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finial. But in some examples the pyramid takes the form of two or three roofs rising one over the other like overlapping conical caps. They rise on projecting string-course but the apex of the pediments of the porches rises only upto the edge of the lower roof. The upper conical cap is, however, decorated with miniature gabled trefoil niche carved in the middle of the four sides. The ribbed melonte like finial crowns the apex of the roof as also each one of the four pediments. But in small temples there is only one pyramidal roof.

About the style of the pillars in Kashmir temples, Fergusson writes : "The pillars which support the porticos . . . are by far the most striking peculiarity of this style, their shafts being almost identical with those of the Grecian Doric, and unlike anything of the class found in other parts of India. Generally they are from three to four diameters in height, diminishing slightly towards the capital, and adorn with sixteen flutes, rather shallower than those of the Grecian order. Both the basis and capitals are, it is true, far more complicated than would have been tolerated in Greece, but at Paestum and in Rome we find in the Doric order a complexity of mouldings by no means unlike that found here . . . Nowhere in Kashmir we find any trace of bracket capital of the Hindus, nor of the changes from square to octagan or to the polygan of sixteen sides, and so on." This European classical influence in Kashmir art patterns, he traces to

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close contact with Gandhara which had received the impulse first through Bacteria (Central Asia) in 300 B.C., and which continued to influence the architecture of Kashmir for twelve centuries after that epoch.

According to R.C. Kak, the number of flutes in different columns of different temples in the valley "is 12, 16, 20 and 24, but never less than 12 nor more than 24." He also doubts "whether or not the diameter of the column was a factor in determining its height." He admits the existence of bracketed capitals along with the 'square' and 'voluted' one's and asserts that the bracket capital is sometimes adorned with figures of *Yakshas*.

The existence of trefoil arch in Kashmir temple is a peculiarity which, Fergusson says, has been borrowed "from the facades of the *Chaitya* halls of the Buddhist", in Cave No 10 at Ajanta or from the facade of the cave at Bhaja. V. Smith however, traces its descent into Kashmir valley from "temples at Nalot, Katas and other places in the Salt Range, which were subject to the crown of Kashmir in the 7th century." E.B. Havell's observation in this connection carried conviction. He says "the Sun Temple of Martand in Kashmir, built in the middle of the 8th century, shows the round trefoil arch used constructively both for doorways and for niches. This being a stone building usual Indian method of constructing arches in horizontal courses is used here as it was several centuries later in the arched

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Bodhisattava from Parihaspura

Lord Vishnu—
a sculptural find
from Avantipura

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screens of the mosques at Old Delhi and at Ajmer."

The plan of the temples in the valley is just a rectangular quadrangle, surrounded on all sides by a colonnaded veranda with close cells or rooms as in a cloistered Buddhist *Vihara*. The temple is usually a single chambered edifice with a portico raised "at the point of intersection of the diagonals of the courtyard", i.e., at its centre. The entrance, which is usually double chambered is built in the middle of the shorter side of the colonnaded veranda leading to the general courtyard and thence to the portico of the shrine.

The shrine edifice has got facets on all sides with trefoil arched niches, the front one, which is usually bigger, serves as entrance to the sanctum. The temple rises on a single or double raised terraces made of ashler-dressed courses, some of which are moulded.

The cells in the colonnaded cloister also stand on raised plinths like the base of the main temple. Some temples have subsidiary shrines, usually at the angles of the courtyard. In some the plan is circular without any facades or trefoil niches. Some are without even cellular colonnade or even a simple veranda. In some there is "an octagonal range of miniature cells in its surrounding walls."

The surface of the walls of the temples is often carved with sculptured reliefs, geometrical and floral patterns, while there sloping cornices

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are decorated with rows of geese alternating with rosettes and *Kirtimukhas*, grinning-lions. Walls of cells and the colonnaded veranda are usually plain while their pilasters inside are carved in low relief.

The ornamental motifs generally met with consist of sculptured figures, geometrical and floral patterns often inter-mixed, figures of gods and goddesses, human couples depicted as drinking, making love or in other human pursuits, and mouldings of various types and patterns.

The Muslim Architecture

The transfer of political power from the Hindu to the Muslim rule in Kashmir got affected almost naturally through domestic accidents and not by any foreign conquest of the Pan-Islamic type bringing with it alien cultural patterns. That accounts for the absence in Kashmir of any Saracenic type of architecture or any Indo-Islamic type developed by Muslim rulers in India. What the Muslims in Kashmir did was to improvise their mosques, tombs and other shrines from the material of disused Hindu and Buddhist temples or otherwise obtained afresh, after the manner and model of the Hindu architecture prevalent in the valley. For decoration purposes in some cases, glazed and patterned tile-work was resorted to, probably after the practice of ancient Buddhist monuments.

No variations in feature, plan or design, are discerned anywhere in the Muslim mosques and

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tombs in Kashmir. They are so alike and even self-contained, usually square structures on square plans. Sometime, like the Jama Masjid at Srinagar, it consists of a group of square-planned edifices knit together by wide-spread colonnade. Brick and mortar is usually used in construction with timber beams, but some mosques are wholly made of logs, though some others use both bricks and logs. The roof of a mosque or tomb is usually surmounted by a steeple with moulded finial often in the form of open umbrella with metal covering. The steeple is just a replica of one in a Hindu temple. Elaborate *Jali*, screen work is usually on windows and balustrades. In older structures the carved ornamentation is of the usual conventional pattern but those affected in later restoration resemble those in the Mughal buildings in India. Some mosques were built just after the Mughal pattern in Delhi, Agra or Lahore.

The Mughal Gardens in Srinagar and elsewhere in Kashmir strictly follow the pattern set by such gardens at Delhi, Lahore and other places in India. But the Kashmir proto-types excels in number and picturesqueness.

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Kashmir Treasure Collection.Digitization by eGangotri

The main entrance of the Parihaspura temple

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Huge and Massive blocks of limestone seen smoothly dressed and finely joined—Parihaspura

The elegant structural patte of the interior wall—Parihaspu

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ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Parihasapura

The Karewas (plateau) of Paraspore or Parihasapura garden and Divar, 14 miles from Srinagar on Srinagar-Baramulla Road were chosen for the site of a new capital city by King Lalitaditya in 750 A.D. The plateau of Parihasapur was reserved for Buddhist building, while two other sites for Hindu temples. All these highlands are full of ruins under heaps of earth and debris; a few have been excavated by the Archaeological Department of the State.

Excavations at Parihasapura have so far yielded the remains of three Buddhist structures, a *Stupa*, monastery and a *Chaitya*. The tectonic character of these has already been briefly noticed in the introduction.

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The most noteworthy feature in these Buddhist buildings is the use of huge and massive blocks of limestone, smoothly dressed and finely joined. The huge pile of weather-beaten and sun-scorched boulders at the north-eastern corner of the plateau, constitutes the remains of the *Stupa* built by Chankuna, a Minister of Lalitaditya, lying at the top of its base, which is 128 ft. square in plan along with offsets and flights of steps. Among the ruins were found pilasters of rails and side-walls of steps, which are decorated with carved figures of seated and standing atlantes. Some of these are in *situ*, while others, lying loose round about were removed to the Sringar Museum. The double plinth of the Stupa, is broad and in its position. Other relics found are round torus stones belonging to the string-course on the drum of the *Stupa*, and pieces of trefoiled arches containing images of the Buddha and Bodhistavas.

Remains of the *Rajavihara* or royal monastery are just to the south of the *Stupa*. It is a cloistered quadrangle having 26 cells round a square court-yard paved with stone flags (only some are extant), with a colonnaded veranda running all along in front of the cells. Some cells are preceded by a vestibule also. A large stone-trough in a corner served as water reservoir.

The plinth is 10 ft. high externally. In one cell was found an earthen jug containing 44 silver coins, belonging to the time of Vinyaditya, Vigraha and Durlabha, kings of Kashmir. These

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are now exhibited in the Numismatic Section of the Srinagar Museum.

To the south of this monastery is the *Chaitya* built by Lalitaditya. The base here too is the usual double. Fragments of trefoil-arch belonging to the entrance, are lying about. Here are some of the massive blocks of stone used in Kashmiri temples like those used in Egyptian buildings. The sanctum measures 27 ft. square with a go-round passage. Its floor consists of a single block of stone measuring 14 ft. by 12½ ft. by 5⅙ ft. The four column-bases at its four corners suggest that its ceiling was supported by four pillars. The roof also might have been of pyramidal type. The side-walls of the stairs were also adorned with atlantes like those of the *Stupa*.

On the Garden Karewa are ruins of a Hindu temple, perhaps all that is left of Lalitaditya's temple of *Goverdhanadhara*. At the Divar plateau are extensive ruins of two large temples of Lalitaditya, called *Pariharakesava* and *Muktakesava*. These have remained yet to be excavated, though one of them appears to have a colonnaded cloistered veranda even larger than that at Martand.

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Ushkar in Baramulla

The village of *Ushkar* or *Wushkar* in Baramulla, is the corrupt form of Havishkapur, a city founded, according to *Rajtarangini,* by the great Kushan King, Havishka, in the second century A.D. Lalitaditya is said to have built here a *Vishnu* temple, *Muktaswamin* and a large Buddhist *vihara* with a *Stupa* in medieval times. Huantsang, who visited Kashmir in 631 A.D. mentions many monasteries and temples, which were also mentioned by Kalhana. Almost all these lie buried except the ruins of a *Stupa* with a surrounding wall still visible towards the west of the village. Alike in style to the *Stupa* at Parihasapura, it is certain that this *Stupa* is the one that Lalitaditya built in the 8th century. The

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Image of Mahadeva at Baramulla

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Remains of the Stupa of Lalitaditya

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lowest course of its base is in position.

Excavation here also yielded the base of an earlier structure, upon which later stupa was raised. This earlier one might have been raised in the Kushan period. This thesis is strengthened by the findings of eleven terracotta heads and other fragmentary limbs of images at the site of this *Stupa*. These relics clearly indicate the influence of the Gandhara School of the 3rd and the 4th centuries in Kashmir-Buddhist architecture. They are now preserved in the Srinagar museum.

A large block of stone lying in a trench to the north of the *Stupa* has in *Sharda* script, ha-sh-ka-ra, inscribed on it showing that the town bore its original name in the time of Lalitaditya with Sanskrit as the literary language.

The compact surrounding wall, made of stone-chips, indicates works of cloistered cells all round it like any Buddhist structure. Two colossal *Shiva-lingas* at the two ends of the village are other curious objects of interest.

The town of Baramulla is the corruption of *Varahamula*, so called after the *Boar* incarnation whose splendid temple, *Adi-Varaha* "Primeval Boar" destroyed by Sikandar *Butshikan* was located at the present site of *Kori-tirtha*, half a mile down the bridge on the right bank of Jhelum. A few fragments of the old temple are still lying about the site, besides the human-faced *Shiva-linga* of great interest.

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Avantipur

The town of Avantipur, 18 miles from Srinagar towards the south on the main cart road, was originally founded by the Hindu prince, Avantivarman, who reigned in Kashmir from 855 to 883 A.D. and who had embellished the new city with two temples. The ruins and remains of which form the chief tectonic interest here. The first and larger one is the temple of *Shiva-Avantishvara.*

Sadly mutilated, the temple stands in a courtyard about 200 ft. by 160 ft. by 170 ft. internally and this is enclosed by a massive stone wall with a row of fluted columns on the western side. Two chambered gateway is in the middle of this wall having plain niches and panels. "It

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General view of the temple at Avantipura

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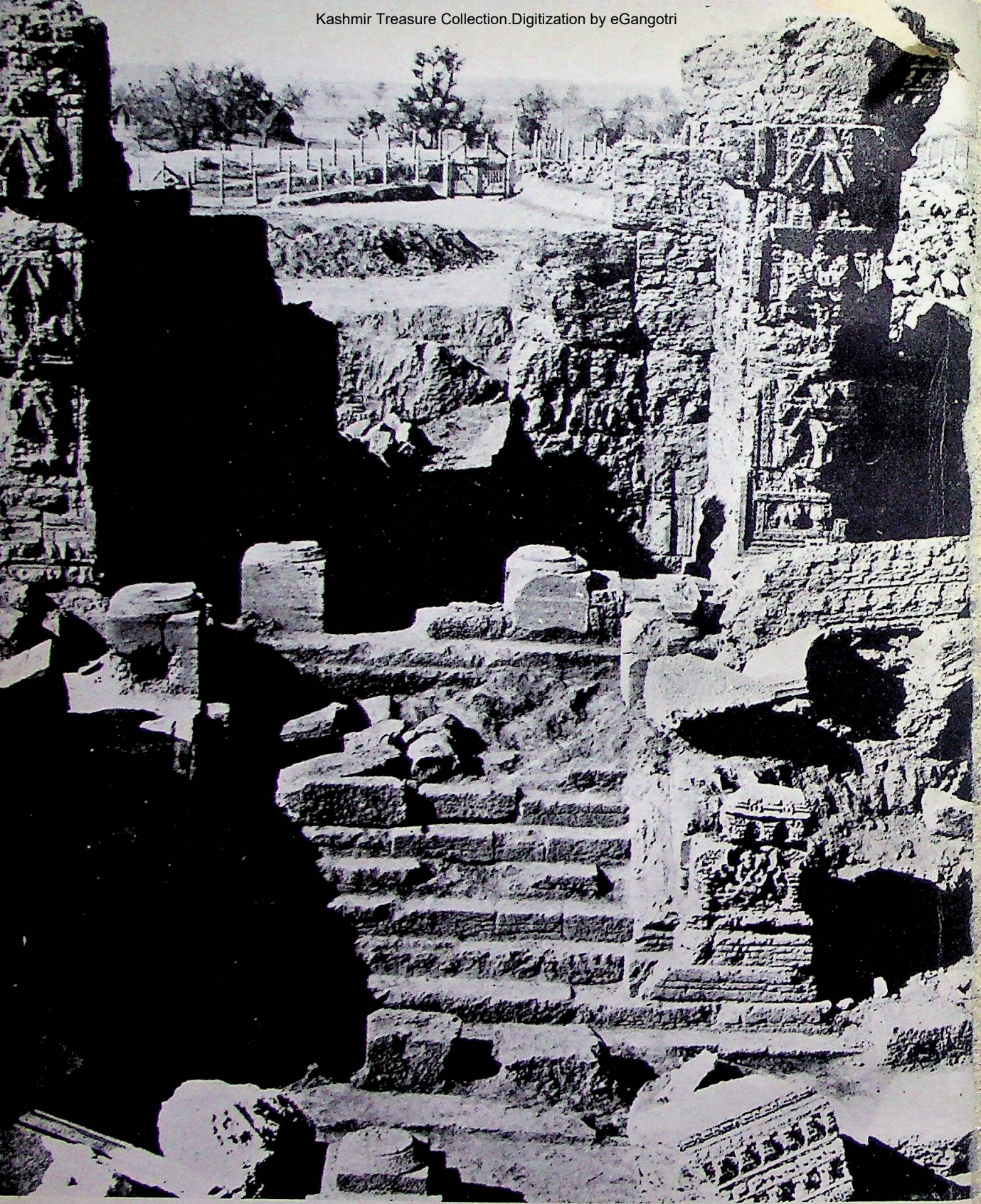

Interior view of the Avantipura Temple

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has pillars all round, like Martand, and almost identical in design and dimensions. The shrine stands in the centre of the courtyard on a 10 ft. high square base of 57⅓ ft. side having a 16 ft. square platform on each of its four corners. It has stairs on each of its four sides leading to the sanctum which presents an appearance of a "confused mass of ruins". The temple base is the only existant part of the monument. It has a series of projecting facets. Ruins of two subsidiary shrines are on the two back corners of the courtyard. The courtyard, however. is full of a good number of fragments from the temple, the most interesting being (i) two spandrels of two arches, (ii) the flower-and-vase capital of a 12 sided pilaster and (iii) the base of a pilaster carved with seated rams and a dancing girl, standing on a throne decorated with two lions and an elephant.

Avantiswami Temple, half a mile distant from the first, is smaller but decorated and better preserved. It is dedicated to Vishnu. It is the work of the same young Prince, when he was only the Crown Prince. It laid wholly buried under a huge mass of silt and debris, and so had naturally escaped much of the fury of the iconoclasts. It was reclaimed by recent excavations.

It stands in the centre of a paved courtyard, 174 ft. by 148 ft., which is enclosed by a wall in the form of a colonnaded peristyle of cells, externally plain, except on the west where a row of fluted columns is seen and a two-chambered

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doorway in the middle. Figures of *Vishnu* and his consorts are sculptured in relief on the front pilasters of the side walls. On either side of this seems to have been a portico projected out on massive columns, one of which still exists, though in a withered condition. The gateway is lavishly ornamented with carved reliefs both internally and externally. Figures of Goddesses, *Ganga* and *Yamuna* riding on crocodile and tortoise, (their respective vehicles), are sculptured in relief on the walls of the outer door-chamber. The scene of a King and his two queens seated on a lion-throne in a sportive mood, is artistically carved in the rectangular panel of the right hand pilaster, and similar scenes with slight variations are repeated on the other side of it. In other panels are depicted scenes of the kings and queens in various poses and postures.

On a huge block of stone in the lowest course of the gateway are four carved panels. In the central one is depicted the scene of a man and two women watching the fight between the caparisoned elephants and the horned birds of huge size. Each of the other two panels contains a standing male figure with folded hands between two human-headed birds. Garuda is depicted in each of the row of circular panels above. The scene of a man with two women offering a cup of wine to one and doves at their feet is beautifully carved in the cross-wall of the gate. A pedimental niche above contains a small figure of *Ganga* with her tortoise. There are other carved scenes and

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figures all round, some rather defaced.

The external surface of the surrounding peristyle is monotonously plain but the ruins of cells on all sides are picturesque. Pilasters everywhere, even on the balustrades of the stairs are full of sculptured reliefs. Some panels facing the courtyard depict erotic scenes. A stepped stone base in front of the main shrine appears to have been the plinth of the *Garuda-dhvaja* column, which has disappeared. The main shrine is raised on a double base having torus moulding and a cyma recta cornice. The sanctum has almost disappeared. Here also four more shrines are raised on the four corner bases of the main temple, which formed the fifth or the central one, gave the whole edifice the shape and style of the *Pancharatna* (five jewels) class.

The cellular colonnade takes the pride of place in the whole ruined structure. There are no less than 69 cells, each having an average measurement of $3\frac{2}{3}$ ft. by $4\frac{5}{6}$ ft. the cell in the centre of each side is a bit larger than the rest and protruded slightly forwards. The cells are preceded by 24 sided columns on plain square bases. The "wall decoration of the peristyle is the range of 138 half-engaged columns on the pilaster of both sides of the trefoiled entrance of the cells". Carved images on most of them are effaced, but in one or two cases the pedistals of the images are still there.

Good many relics and antiquities have been unearthed at the site during the excavations,

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which have been housed in the Srinagar museum. Among the relics found is a larger jar bearing the name Avantivarman. Kalhana states that the temple suffered desecration several times during the Hindu period.

About these two temples Fergusson observes: "The characteristic that seems most clearly to distinguish the style of the temples at Martand from that of those of Avantipore is the greater richness of detail which the latter exhibit; just such a tendency, in fact, towards the more elaborate carvings of the Hindu style as one might expect from their difference in date". Comparing the carving of a fragment of a pillar, he says, that it "is elegant in itself, and almost as interesting historically, as the Doric, in as much as, if it is compared with the pillars of the tomb of Mycene it seems dificult to escape the conclusion that the two forms were derived from same common source. At all events, there is nothing common between the Peloponnesus and Kashmir, so far as we know, that so nearly resemble it''.

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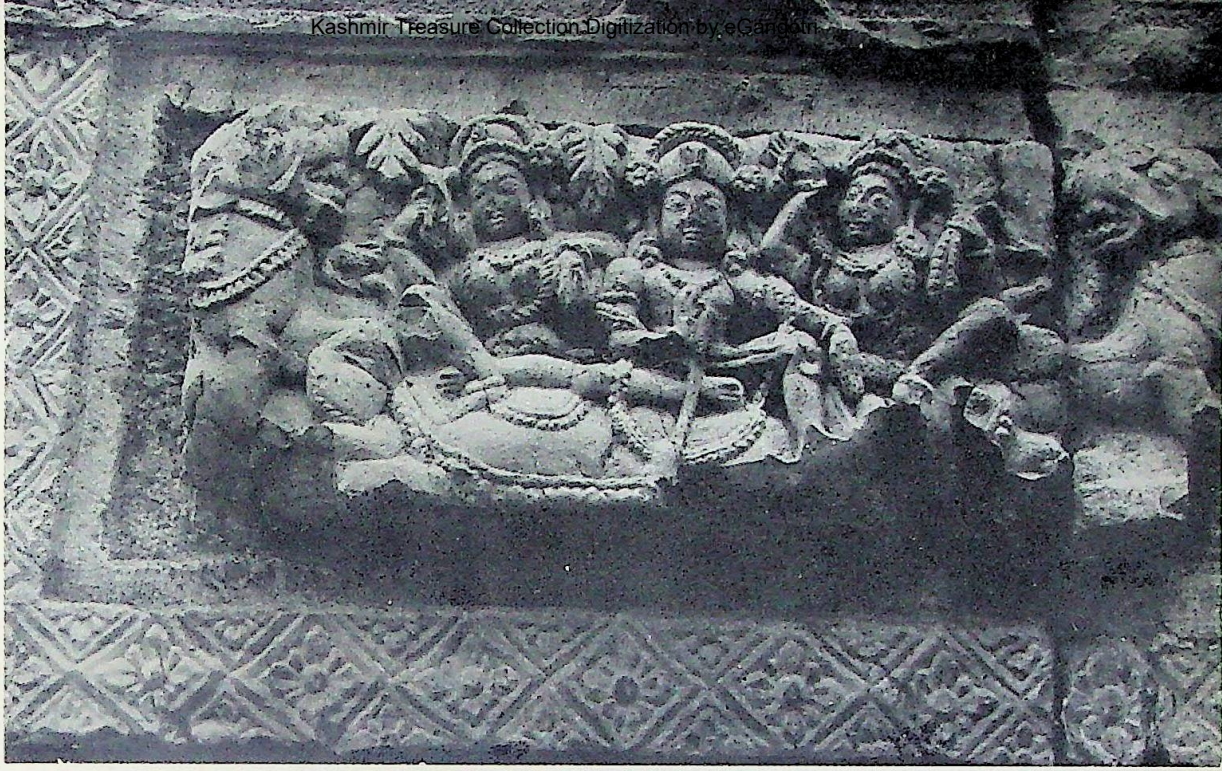

A panel of sculptured figures on the interior wall of one of the temples at Avantipura

Chauri Bearer—
Avantipura

A figure carved inside the main tample at Avantipura

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Temple at Pevas

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Temple at Payar

One of the most elegant, though also one of the smallest temples, is the one at Payar, a village some six miles from Avantipur at the foot of the Karewa (or Knoll). The architectural style of the little temple as well as its dedication to Shiva point to the 11th century as the date of its construction.

This little temple, according to Fergusson, is made of only six pieces of stone, four for the walls and two for the roofs while R.C. Kak mentions the super-structure to have been made of ten stones only. This measured number of blocks has lent it a certain dignity and importance, small though its dimensions are—hardly

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8 ft. square internally and 21 ft. high, including the moulded basement.

The sanctum inside is open on all the four sides though approached by a single flight of steps on the east. The doorways are rectangular each surmounted by a trefoil arch over which rise the pediment. There pediments rest on the capitals of pilasters carved with pairs of geese, while the capitals of trefoil arches bear recumbent bull figures. Each trefoil itself bears carved relief of *Shiva* in one or other of his many aspects—in one seated cross-legged with devotees, in the other as *Bhairava*, in the third six-armed dancing *Shiva*, and in the last the three headed *Shiva*.

The pyramidal roof is divided into two sections by a square-spaced band decorated by flowers and mouldings. Gabled niches with trefoil filled with floral carvings are on the sides of the upper pyramid.

In the interior it is all plain on the walls, but the ceiling is hollowed out into the shape of a dome with a full-blown lotus flower at the apex. The lower edge of the dome is also decorated with fillets and beaded circle. Naked and winged *Yakhsha* figures fill the spandrels, appearing to support the roof with their outstretched hands and legs. The ceiling here is just a replica, on a small scale, of the temple at Pandrethan.

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Hari Parbat Fort

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Sangin Darwaza—one of the main gates of the collosal rampart around Hari Parbat

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Hari Parbat Fort

Hari Parbat is an isolated hill on the northern outskirts of Srinagar. It is crowned by a fort built during the Pathan regime in Kashmir before the Mughal occupation under Akbar, who in his munificence got the large rampart, nearly 3 miles in circumsference, constructed in the 44th year of his reign, as a relief measure to the famine-stricken people of the Valley. From ancient times, the hill, according to tradition was considered sacred to the Hindus, for being associated with the goddess "Durga" who had crushed the demon Jalodbhava in the lake by dropping the hill there. She has since been worshipped at the spot, called *Chakreshwari*, where stands the wheel emblem of the Goddess, naturally carved on a huge block of rock, now

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covered with a thick coat of red paint. A small temple inside the fort enshrined the image of eighteen-armed Goddess Durga.

Muslims also have used a part of the hill, where they have built the shrine of Makhdum Sahib. The fort is an ordinary structure of durable concrete and has no special architectural interest and so are the other two Hindu and Muslim shrines. But the colossal rampart and its two gates—*Kathi Darwaza* and *Sangin Darwaza* —as well as the mosque of *Akhun Mulla Shah*, possess artistic interest of significance. The rampart is now in ruins and almost has disappeared at many places, but a good portion is still in tact. Its bastioned and parapetted defensive ramparts give us a good idea of the security measures taken by the powers of the time against any attacks. Of the two important gates the *Kathi Darwaza*, being the main entrance and exit — has the inscriptions engraved on its door jambas and arches—spandrels which are further decorated with arched and rectangular panels and niches and beautiful medallions in high relief. The gate, as such, is a simple stone structure having a domed apartment in the centre with two side-bays and many small niches and recesses on either side. A staircase goes up to the roof.

The other gate, the *Sangin Darwaza*, though similar to the one described above in plan and design, is more ornate. It has two corbelled windows on the exterior, and two staircases on two sides to reach the roof.

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Loduv Temple

There are two temples in the *Loduv* village, a few miles to the South-East of *Pandrethan* and some three miles from Barus on the main road. The larger one is architecturally interesting, bearing, as it does, striking tectonic resemblance to the "angular roofed" Buddhist *vihara* of Gandhara at Guniyar in the Swat Valley, as pointed out by Foucher in his book on Gandhara *vihara.* This was constructed in the 5th century A.D.

The temple stands in the middle of a shallow tank fed by a spring. It is an extremely plain structure with a side of 24 ft., circular internally with a diameter of 17½ ft., just like the Shiva temple at the *Shankaracharya* hill top. Its domical ceiling springs over a plain projecting

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string course at a height of about 10 ft. from the bottom. The dome was built of projecting courses of lime-concrete. The few extant stones of the roof clearly indicate "that it was steel, straight and sloped" originally. It has a single entrance, arched at the top in a semi-circular form built of horizontal projecting courses and surmounted by a single and simple pediment.

The smaller temple is just behind the larger one, a bit high up the hill. They are both alike in structural design and plan with the difference that the doorway in the smaller temple has "developed into a well-defined portico with a trefoil niche" or arch, of which the lower courses are still extant. Internally the small structure is only 6 ft. square. The Loduv temple, was either the contemporary of the Guniyar structure of Gandhara, i.e., of the 5th century or at the most a century later.

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Smaller temple at Laduv

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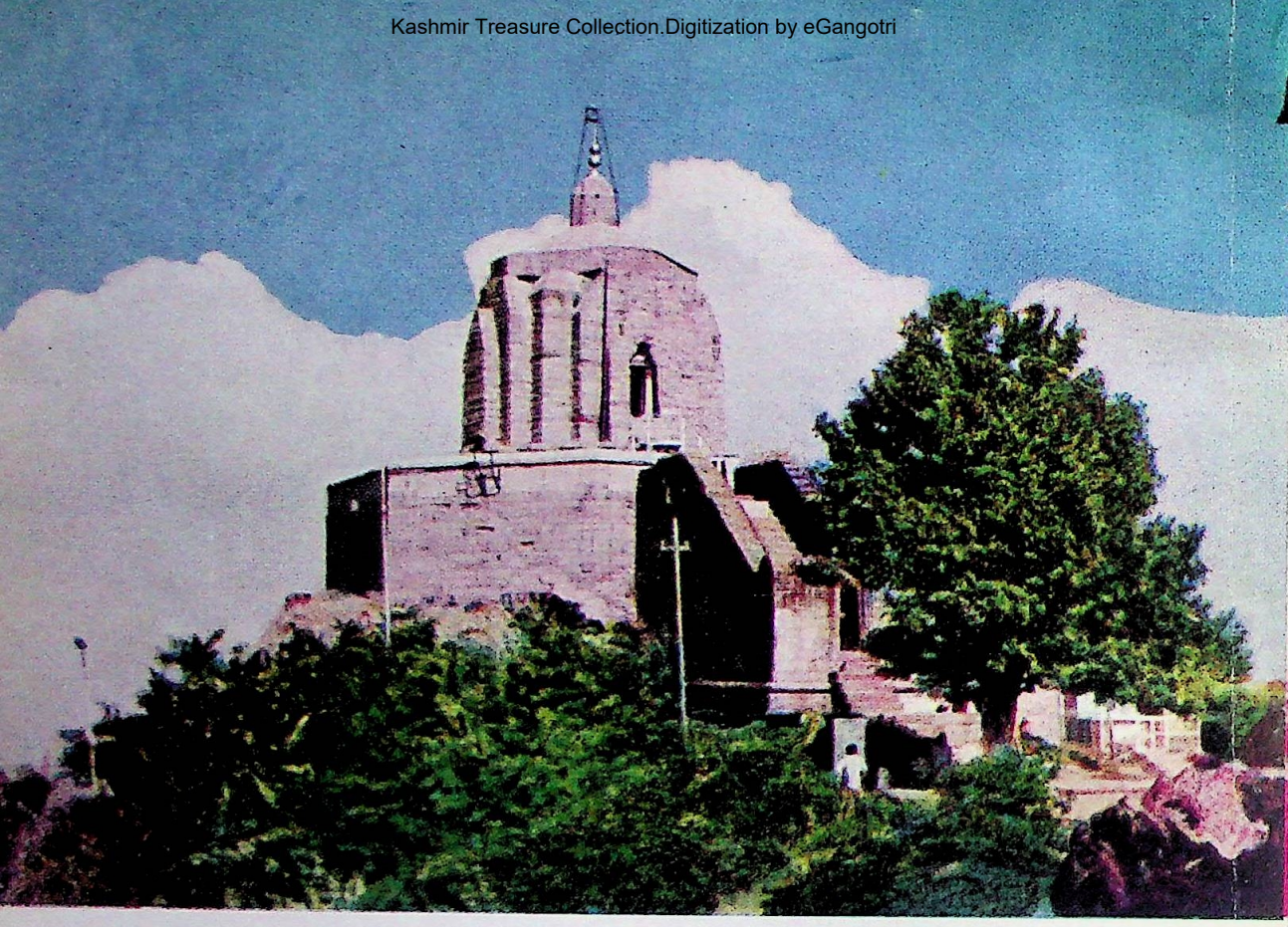

Shankaracharya temple

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Shankaracharya Temple

Shankaracharya Temple, standing on the top of a hill of that name, 1000 feet high from the surrounding plain to the south east of Srinagar, commands one of the finest views in the whole of Kashmir. In Hindu times the hill bore the name of *Gopadri* which still survives in the locality known as "Gopakar" at the south west foot of the hill, and the temple was called *Jyeshtheshvara* built by King Gopaditya (Kalhana's Rajtarangini, verse 341, Ist BK.). He probably raised it in the 6th century on the site of an older temple, built about 200 B.C. by Jaluka, a son of Emperor Asoka. It was substantially repaired by King Lalitaditya who reigned in the 8th century A.D. It has received

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repairs from time to time up to date. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and later held as a memorial to the great saint and teacher, Sri Shankarcharya.

The temple is built on a high octagonal platform as plinth which is enclosed by a low parapet wall, 23'-6" long on each side, originally adorned on the inside by a range of 84 round headed riches in triangular steps. The temple inside is a circular chamber with sanctum in the centre having a huge *lingam*. Externally the structure is square with extraordinarily thick walls, which further converge into a domical ceiling and roof upto the finial. It has no trefoiled entrance or niches. This temple resembles the larger one at Loduv.

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A close view of the Shankaracharya temple

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The roof is of pyramidal type with ornamental band of deities which divide it horizontally into two sections or parts, the uqper part having four trefoiled open niches like those found in the Gandhara architecture. The walls of the sanctum chamber on the inside are plain while its ceiling provides one of the best examples of carving on stone in the valley. The square ceiling is carved out into three concentric squares, each of which cuts off the angles of the one just inside it. The innermost square comprehends within it a full bloom lotus within a beaded circle. This disposition of squares and circular carved slabs leaves twelve triangular spaces, in which have been carved out beautiful figures of flying *Yakshas*, in pairs in larger squares and single in the smaller ones.

The floor of the shrine is paved with stone flags. A seven feet square depression in the centre of the room is supposed to hold the pedestal of sanctum dias for the presiding image of the temple. This has been missing along with the image.

The well-preserved temple plinth, which now remains submerged under the marshy water for a part of the year has a string-course of sculptured elephants running round the temple upon which walls of the monument rise. Originally the temple site was a piece of dry land. The springs, that have turned the site marshy, seem to have been the nature's freak at some later date. There is a seated figure, in the trefoiled niche above

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'Avoloketeshwara' from Pandrethan Temple—Srinagar Museum

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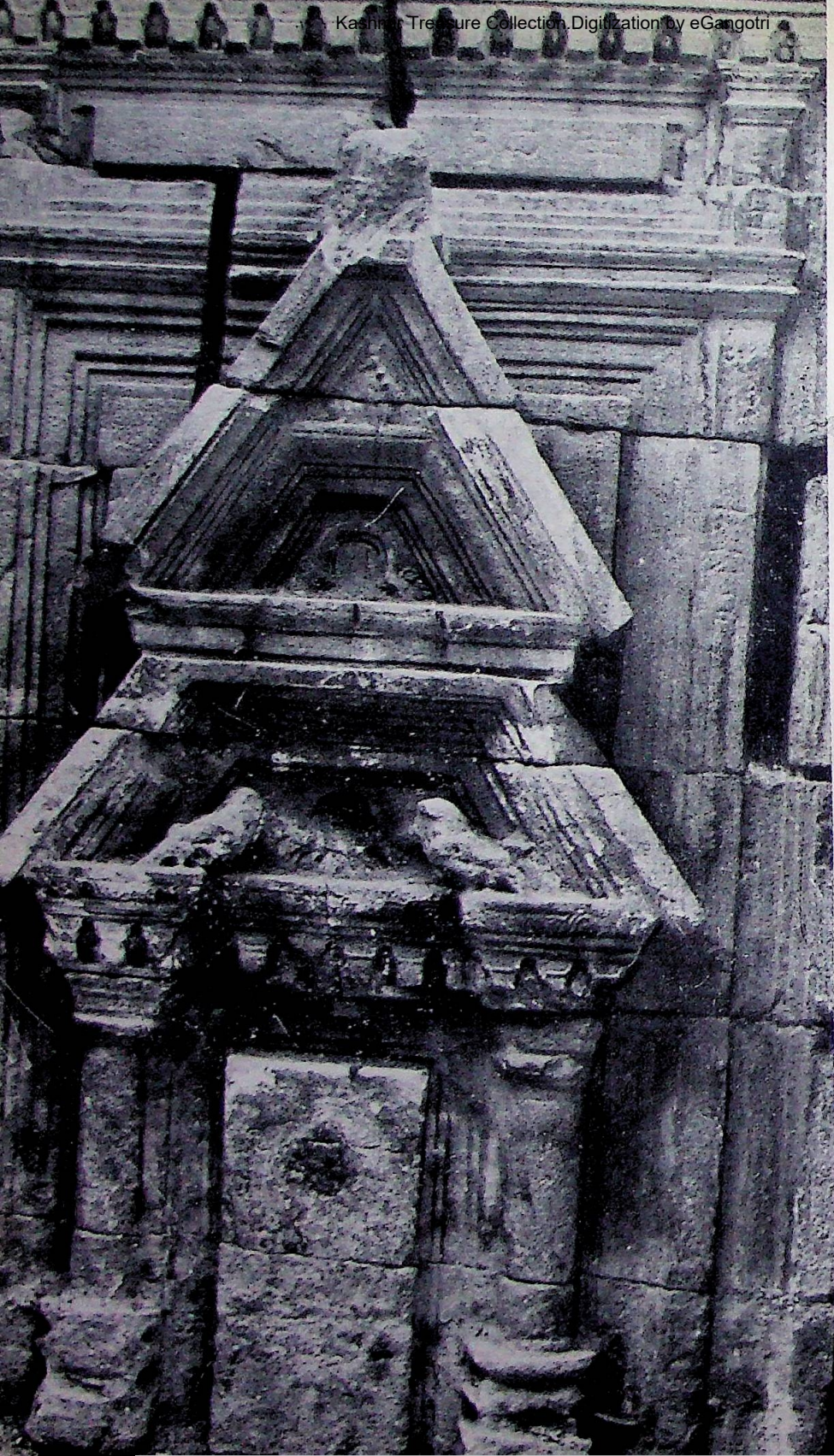

Interior of the Pandrethan temple

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the northern entrance, which is identified with the *Lakulisha* form of *Shiva*. The internal disposition of the temple is such as can enshrine only a *lingam*. These evidences are proof positive that the temple was a *Shiva* shrine named *Shiva Rilhaneshvara*, built by Rilhana, the Minister of *Jayasimha*, about 1135 A.D. as mentioned in the *Rajtarangini*. This identification of the temple is in no way gainsaid by any peculiarity in the architectural pattern of the shrine.

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Martand Temple

Martand is some five miles from Anantnag to the eastern cart-road to Pahalgam. Martand literally means Sun, and is now convertable with the ruined temple of the Sun, standing on the top of the lofty plateau of the name, and commanding a superb view of the valley below. It is the situation of the site of the temple that has added to its grandeur and has excited admiration from all. Fergusson remarks: "it is the architectural lion of Kashmir, and all tourists think it necessary to go into raptures about its beauty and magnificence comparing it to Palmyra or Thebes or other wonderful groups of ruins of the old world".

"The roofless temple, the largest in Kashmir

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Martand Temple devoted to the Sun God

Kashmir Treasure Collection.Digitization by eGangotri

sures internally 220 ft. by 142 ft. "The colonnade lining the wall is composed of 84 pillars, with intervening niches surmounted by the trefoil arches and triangular pediments or gables, characteristic of the style. The cell, or chapel, which occupied the centre of each face of the enclosure, originally reached the height of about 30 ft. The central cell on each face of the colonnaded peristyle is thus larger and higher than the columns amid which it is placed, which do not rise higher than $9\frac{1}{2}$ ft. except the two large fluted pillars, 13 ft. in height and $8\frac{3}{4}$ ft. apart, in the middle of one of its larger sides. It is, however, not the height of the columns, but their strongly-impressed Grecian aspect that is really curious and interesting."

The gate to the temple is in the middle of the western side of the quadrangle and its width is just equal to that of the temple itself. In the disposition of its part and in the decoration of its pediments and pilasters, gateway just looks a replica of the temple itself open to west and east; its two chambers formed by the cross-wall served as outer and inner portico. The pediment on each side of the gateway, was supported by massive fluted pillars, $17\frac{1}{2}$ ft. in height, or 8 ft. higher than those in the quadrangle. One such pillar still stands in tact. There seems close affinity in the style of the architecture and entablature, which connect these pillars to the gateway, between the temple of Martand and the *Avantiswami* temple at Avantipur. According

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to a report in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1915-16) "the roof was no doubt pyramidal, for a portion of the sloping mouldings of its pediment was still to be seen on one side".

The walls of the gateway are lavishly adorned both internally and externally by carved rows of double pediment niches changing alternately with rectangular panels; the former are sculptured in low-relief single standing figures of gods or amorous groups like those at Avantipur, and in the latter — sitting groups, floral scrolls, pairs of geese and such like motifs. The tall figure of a three-headed Vishnu is sculptured in each of the two large niches in the walls of the inner gate-chamber with rows of dancing urchins in humorous poses below.

The main temple measures exactly 63 ft. in length by 36 ft. in width at the eastern end and 27 ft. at the western side which has the entrance door. It contains the three classical chambers—*ardha mandapa*, as the front porch (18′-10″ square), corresponding to the Greek *Pronaos*, and the *Garbhagriha*, the inner cell of the temple, (18′-5″ by 13′-10″) corresponding to the Greek *Naos* and Roman *Cella*.

In consonance with the literal implication of the word *mandapa* meaning "ornamented", the two outer chambers are highly decorated, the first being also open, while the inmost cell is quite plain and closed on three sides. Among the decorations on the walls is to be seen the

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well-executed image of the river Goddess *Ganga*, with her usual emblems standing on her crocodile with two attending females, one holding an open umbrella over her head and the other the fly-whisk. On the opposite side stands similarly the image of goddess *Jamuna* on her tortoise with usual attendants etc. Flying pairs of *Gandharvas* are depicted above in relief. The statues in the western walls are the three faced images of *Vishnu* with decorated crowns or head-dress, the radiating points of which have been mistaken for snake hoods by Fergusson. The arms and other emblems in them are broken or weather worn and so cannot be properly identified. So is the case with the 14 seated figures below the cornice. Many other images elsewhere remain to be identified.

In one of the two panels on east wall is executed the figure of *Aruna*, the charioteer of *Surya*, holding the reins of his seven horses.

The journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1848, further observes: "The walls of the temple itself are 9 ft. thick and of its entrance chamber only four and a half feet thick, being respectively one half and one fourth of the interior width of the building".

"Such was once the magnificent mass of building dedicated to the worship of the Sun . . . Entrance was gained by a wide flight of steps which are now covered by ruins. On each of the other sides was a closed doorway surmounted by a trefoiled arch, and covered by a pediment which

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Main entrance of the Martand temple

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Interior view of the pillared corridor on the northern side of the temple

Part of the gate and pillared wall inside the temple

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rose to a height of 60 ft. At the angles of the buildings on each side of the doorway were stout pilasters, which were divided into panels each decorated with a miniature representation of the Aryan style of temple. The pilasters sustained the entamblature, and gave a look of strength and solidity to the walls which was fully needed for the support of the vast and massive roof. This lofty pyramid of stone was itself rendered lighter and more elegant in appearance by being broken into two portions separated by an ornamental band, and by the addition of small niches with pointed roofs and trefoild recesses, all of which were in strict keeping with the general character of the building".

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Patan

Midway between Srinagar and Baramulla, a distance of 34 miles, is Patan, called in ancient days *Shankarapurapathana*, after the name of its founder, Shankaravarman (883-902 A.D.). The Kashmiri chronicle, Rajtarangini, makes mention of three temples at Patan—(i) *Shankaragaurishvara* (ii) *Sugandesha* and (iii) *Ratanavardhanesha.* The first is identified with the ruins of larger temple by the King, the second with the other small one, built by his Queen Sugandha, and the third, so far untraceable, was built by his Minister.

The Sugandesha temple is $12\frac{7}{12}$ ft. square with a portico in front, open on one side only, and has trefoiled niches on other sides

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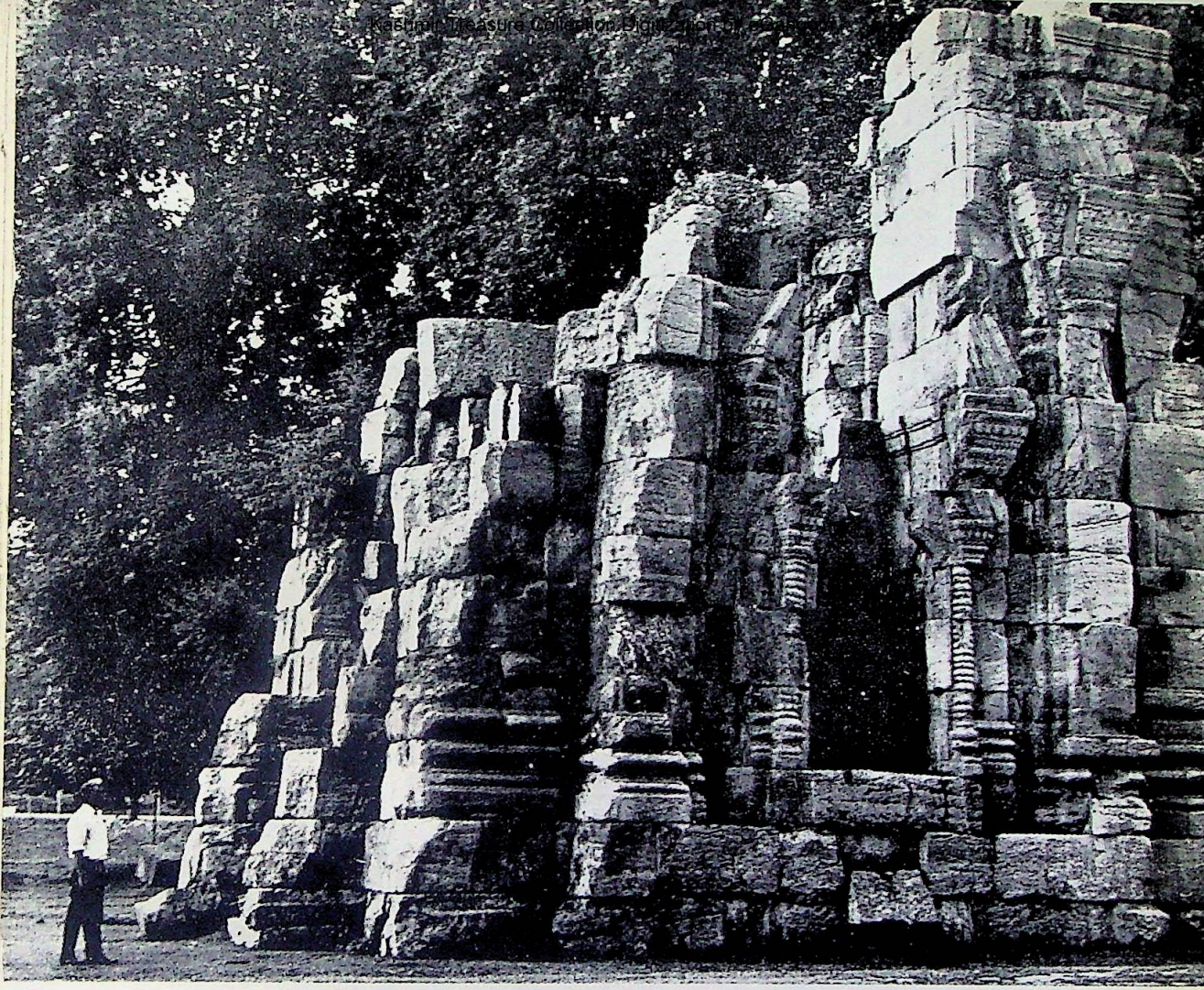

Side view of the temple at Pattan

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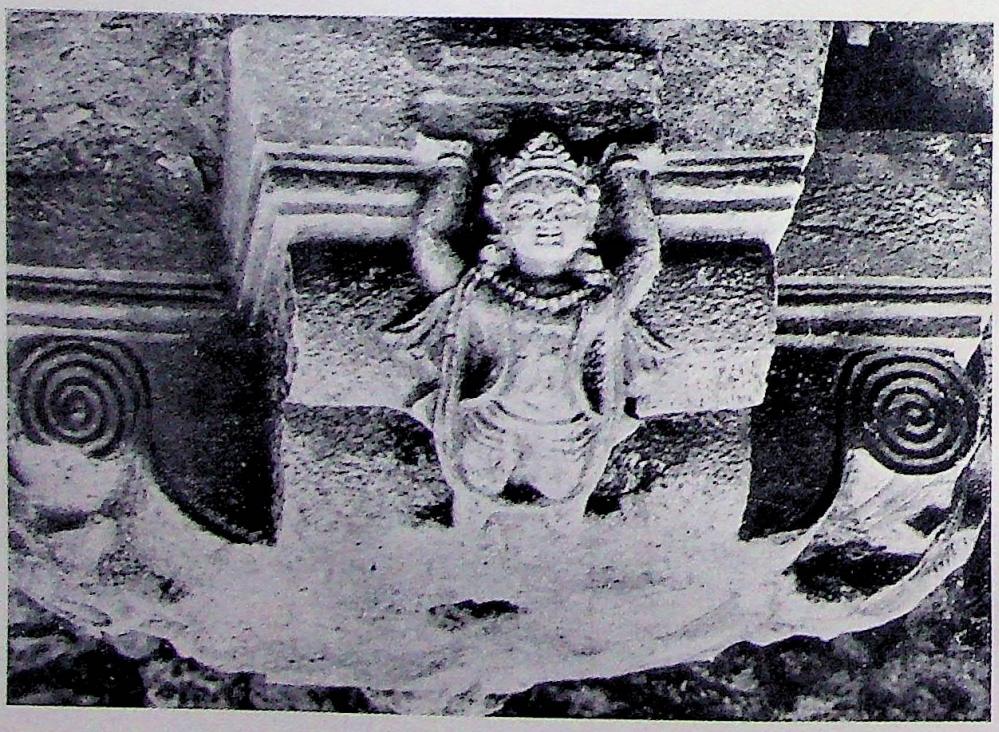
The entrance porch and the enclosure wall of the Pattan temple on the eastern side



Bracket capital with figure excavated near the temple

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holding images. The temple seems not to have been completed. It stood in the middle of a courtyard on a double base and was enclosed by a wall with a colonnaded cellular corridor all round.

Among the ruined fragments lying scattered about, were found (i) two pieces of fluted columns with their capitals, (ii) two bracket-capitals with carved atlantes, (iii) one huge cornice stone with rows of grinning lions, beads and rosettes carved on it; (iv) another stone with two small trefoiled niches with female figures carved on it, and two rectangular niches, one having seated atlante between two lions and other two human headed birds carved on it. The surrounded colonnaded cellular corridor is just like the one in *Avanti-swami* temple. Bases of some of them are still there in their positions while those of others are scattered about.

The *Shankaragaurishvara* temple, built by the King is only a larger edition of the Queen's temple. Much of the temple, especially its plinth, a sideshrine and its peristyle round the enclosing wall, remain under debris due to the accumulation of rain water. Though a good deal of its grandeur lies concealed, it is still an imposing pile. The shrine chamber is 17 ft. square, and the central stone of its floor measures 12½ ft. by 10 ft. having nine cirucular holes in three rows, probably as mortices of tenons holding up the pedestal of the idol in position.

A trefoiled niche in the wall of the portico

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has the figures of *Shiva* and *Ganesha* in two separate panels carved on it, showing thereby that the temple was dedicated to *Shiva*. Geometrical and other patterns as well as human-headed birds are some of the motifs carved on the exterior of the temple at places.

A recent excavation, made near the Patan Dak Bungalow, has revealed a strange old *baoli* collecting its water in three inter-connected rectangular reservoirs, in the middle one of which is a miniature temple, made originally of only three stone slabs but the top-stone is missing. It is $2\frac{2}{3}$ ft. square externally and open on all sides. Such small shrines belong to the decadent medieval Hindu period.

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Buniyar

A best preserved large ancient temple stands at Buniyar village 13 miles down Baramulla and two miles above Rampur on the Jhelum valley road. Standing in a cloistered enclosure, 145 ft. by 120 ft. on a bouble base, the shrine measures externally 26 ft. square, while its interior is only 14 ft. square. Fergusson observes :

"It is nearly perfect and gives a very fair idea of the style of these buildings. The trefoiled arch with the tall pediment, the detached column and the architrave, are as distinctly shown here as in any other existing example of a Kashmiri colonnade, and present all those quasi-classical features which were inherited from the neighbouring province of Gandhara".

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The cloistered and colonnaded quadrangle consists of 53 cells and the double-chambered gateway, which on either side is faced with a trefoil arch surmounted by a steep pediment. The lintels of the arches are supported on pairs of columns with double capitals. The cornice on the external face of the gate walls is decorated with *Kirtimukhas* and miniature trefoiled arches alternately. Each cell is rectangular, 7 ft. by 4 ft. having a trefoiled entrance surmounted by a steep pediment on half engaged columns. A colonnaded corridor runs in front of the cells. The columns stand on base similar to that of the temple and a transverse beam connects their capitals with the roof of the cells. The entablature rises over these beams.

The access to the senctum of the temple is through a lofty trefoil arch, standing on pilasters erected outside the rectangular entrance which is again surmounted by an ornamented trefoil and a steep pediment. The pedestal of the image stands on broad plaftorm. The original image of Vishnu is now replaced by small *Shiva-lingas* obtained from the bed of the river Narbada. The string-course, from which the ceiling dome rises, is still there, but the domed ceiling, which Bishop Cowie saw in its place in 1865 is now no more. It was, perhaps originally, similar to the one of the larger temples at Wangath.

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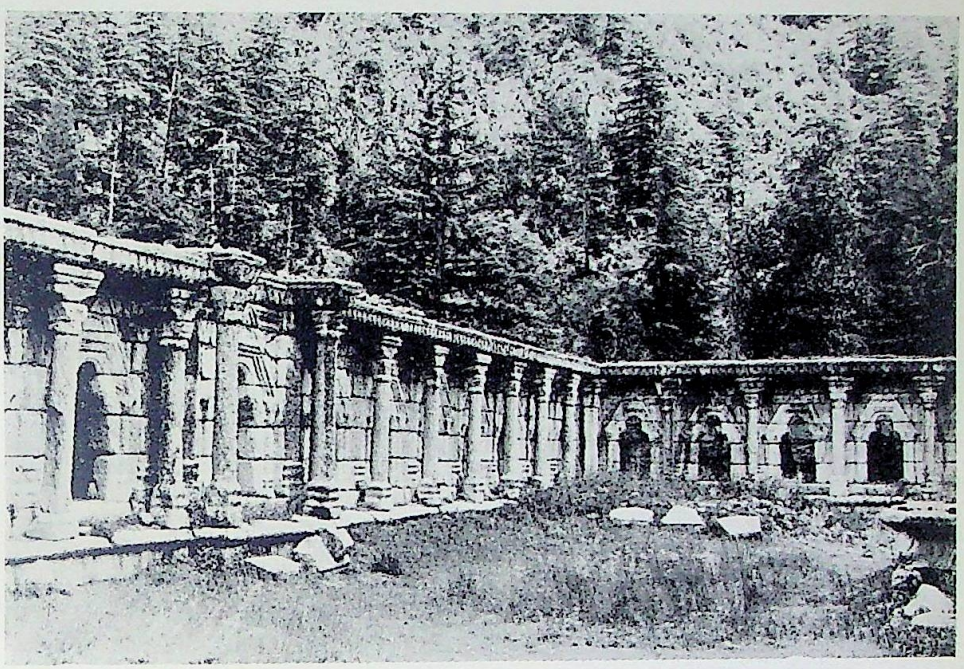
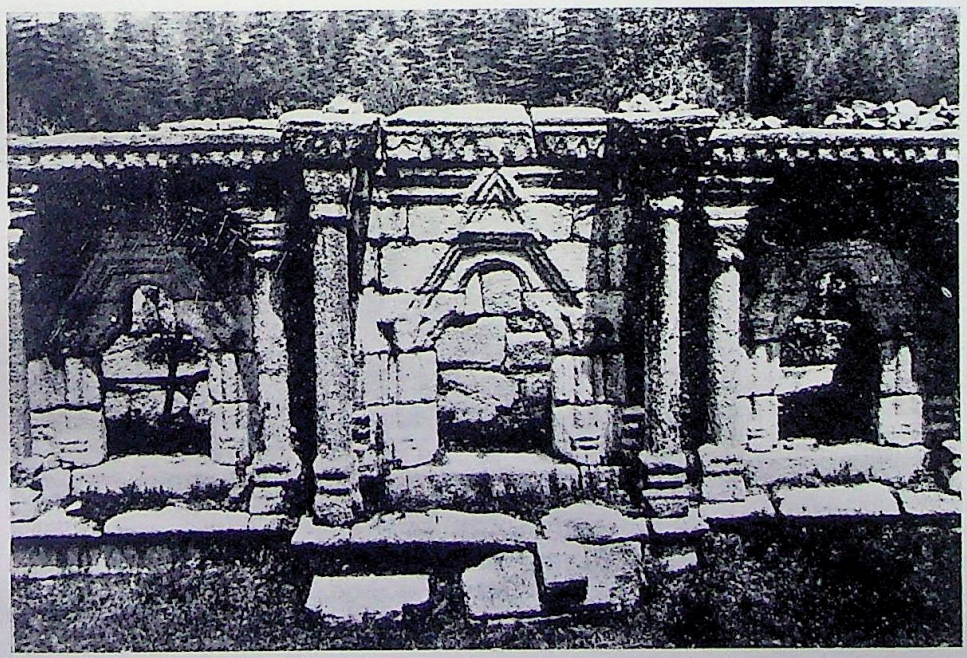


Central peristyle—south-east corner



Closer view of the peristyle

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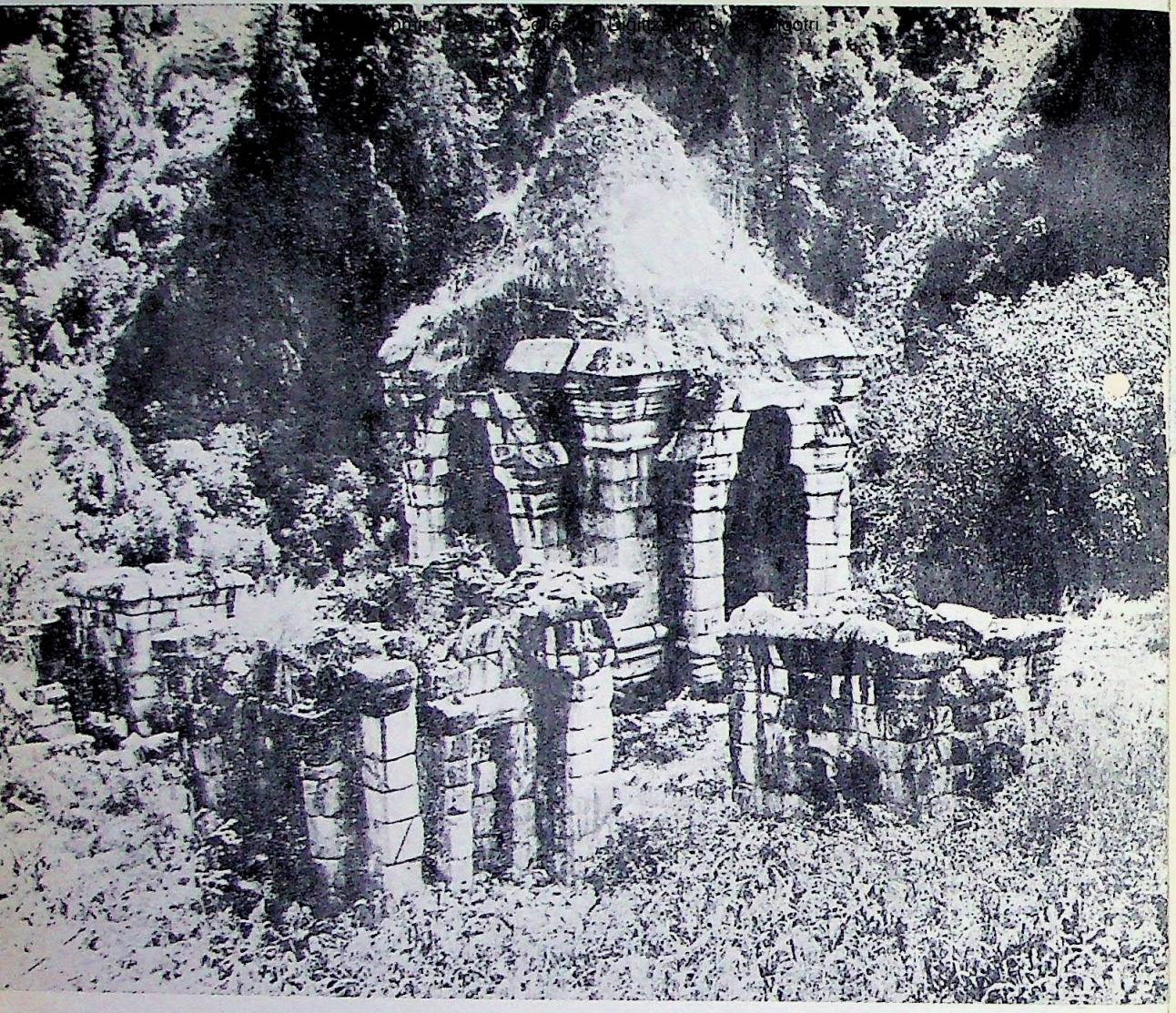

One of the western group temples of Wangath

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Wangath

Wangath, a mountain village, on the Srinagar-Sonamarg high road, points to a further uphill trudge of 8 to 10 miles upto *Narannag* at the foot of the steep Butsher mountain leading to Gangabal pilgrimage. Narannag is the site of an interesting group of temples, commonly known as "Wangath" temples, though the village of that name is three miles distant.

Narannag, was in ancient times called *Sodaratirtha*, an important place of pilgrims, having a large spring, round which stood two groups of temples, built in the medieval times. All these are almost in ruins. They were built of greyish granite. The first group is of six temples in one enclosure. The principal one among them

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is 25 ft. square, and differs from other Kashmiri temples in having two entrances on opposite sides, and a domed ceiling, though externally the roof was pyramidal. A large quantity of lime-concrete called *Kanjur* has been used in the masonary, especially in the circular courses which bring about the domed ceiling, at the apex of which is a full-blown lotus. The interior of the shrine measures only 17 ft. square. An unpaved square space in the centre of the floor marks the position of the pedestal for the image. The two closed faces of the temple on the outside are decorated with square-topped recesses each with the pedestal of an image like the one at sanctum. The inner structure of the roof is made of the rubble-stone-lime concrete masonry.

Sir Aurel Stein identified this spring with the *Jyeshthesha* temple of Lalitaditya. Other five temples in the group only exist in fragments showing a little variation here and there in structural tectonics of not much interest.

The gateway of the enclosure of this group of temples is in the north-west corner and not in the middle of the cloistered wall. This is another departure from the usual practice. Fragments of the columns which supported the roof of the porch or gateway are lying loose on the site. The retaining wall of the plinth on which the group of temples stands is made of closely put pieces of slate.

The second group of temples lying some 700 yards off is approached by a broad causeway

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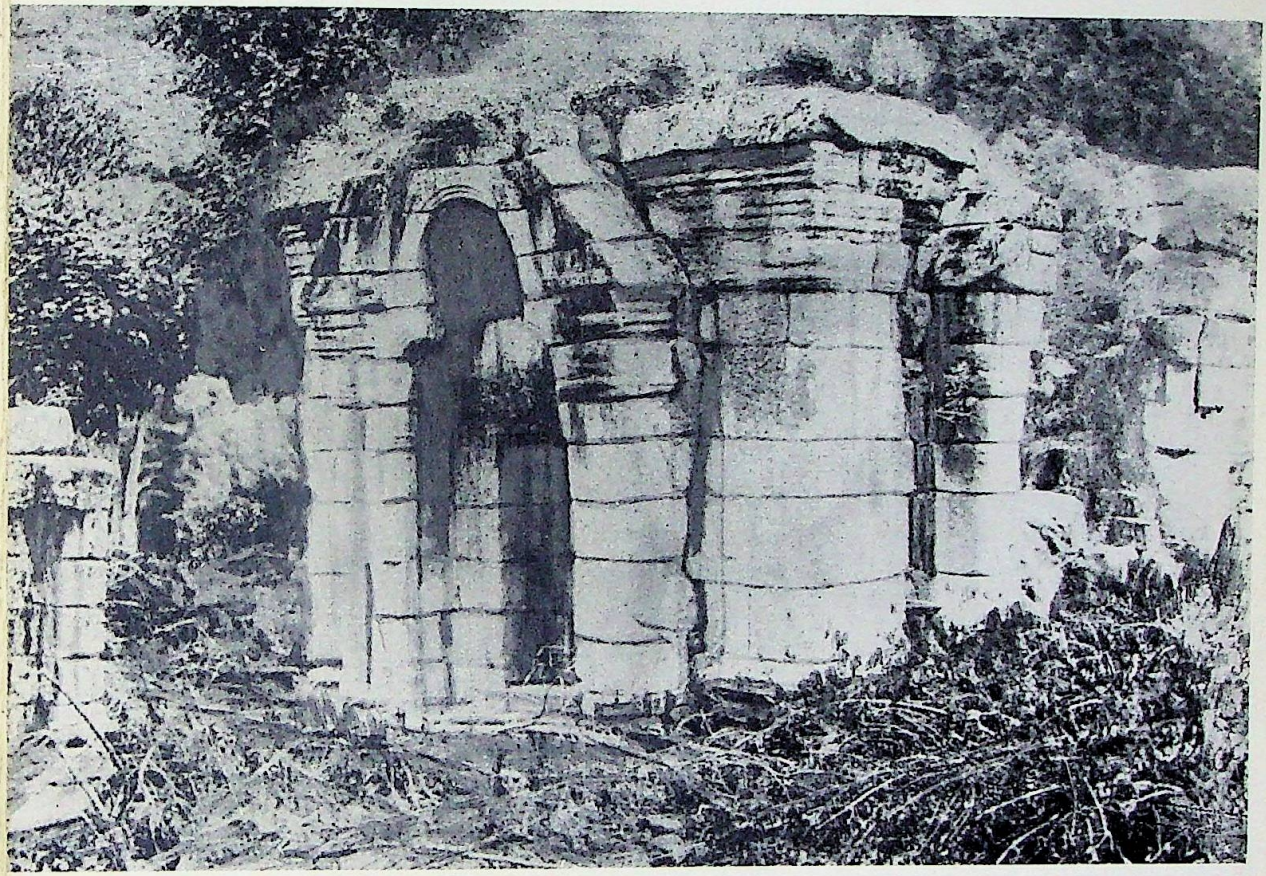

Main shrine at Wangath

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Principal temple at Narannag

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paved with blocks of granite. Between the two groups of temples are other structures, all in ruin, except one which has its base in tact, from which it appears to have been a pillared hall of pavilion type, 100 ft. long and 67 ft. broad. The bases of the columns are in their positions, eight on the longer side and four on the shorter one.

The other group of six temples, all in ruins and partly buried under ground are also enclosed in a massive rectangular stone wall pierced by the double chambered gateway. The largest one in the group has been identified with the temple of *Shiva-Bhuteshvara* by Sir Aurel Stein. Internally it is 17 ft. square and quite like the largest one in the first groups. Among the remains of other smaller temples in the group is the immense rectangular stone trough carved out of a single gigantic block of granite.

The retaining wall of this group of temples is made of massive granite blocks of extra-ordinary size, all beautifully dressed and finely joined like logs. The site, where these temple ruins stand, is still the place of pilgrimage visited every year by pilgrims going to immerse the ashes of their dead relatives in the holy lake of Gangabal at the foot of the Harmukh mountain.

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have been constructed round about the Dal Lake, with many more in the suburbs outside.

Most of these gardens have disappeared, and some are in ruins, but the few that remained and are still well preserved, are sufficient to prove for the valley the epithet "*the Paradise of the Indies*". Constructed against the background of the verdant alluvial mountain slopes, with plenty of natural water supply and salubrious climate and commanding an excellent view of the Dal Lake, the gardens are a feast of colour from spring to autumn. Among others the best preserved and most frequented are *Chashma-i-Shahi*, *Nishat* and *Shalimar*, though Bagh-i-Nagin, and Bagh-i-Nasim of Akbar's make also preserve their original character.

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Chashma-i-Shahi

"The Royal Spring" is the smallest Mughal Garden laid out by Shah Jahan in three terraces round about the Spring of ice-cold water, famous for its medicinal properties. It has cascades, two pavilions, water-courses, tanks and splashing fountains and the surrounding concrete wall—all of Mughal origin except for the repairs. The tank in the lowest terrace has five playing fountains, four near the four corners and the fifth in the centre. A carved chute ripples down the water from the channel in the top terrace to the tank in the middle terrace in which only one fountain plays. The coolest and the purest water, gushing out naturally and perennially from the real "*Chashma-i-Shahi*" or the "Royal Spring", falls

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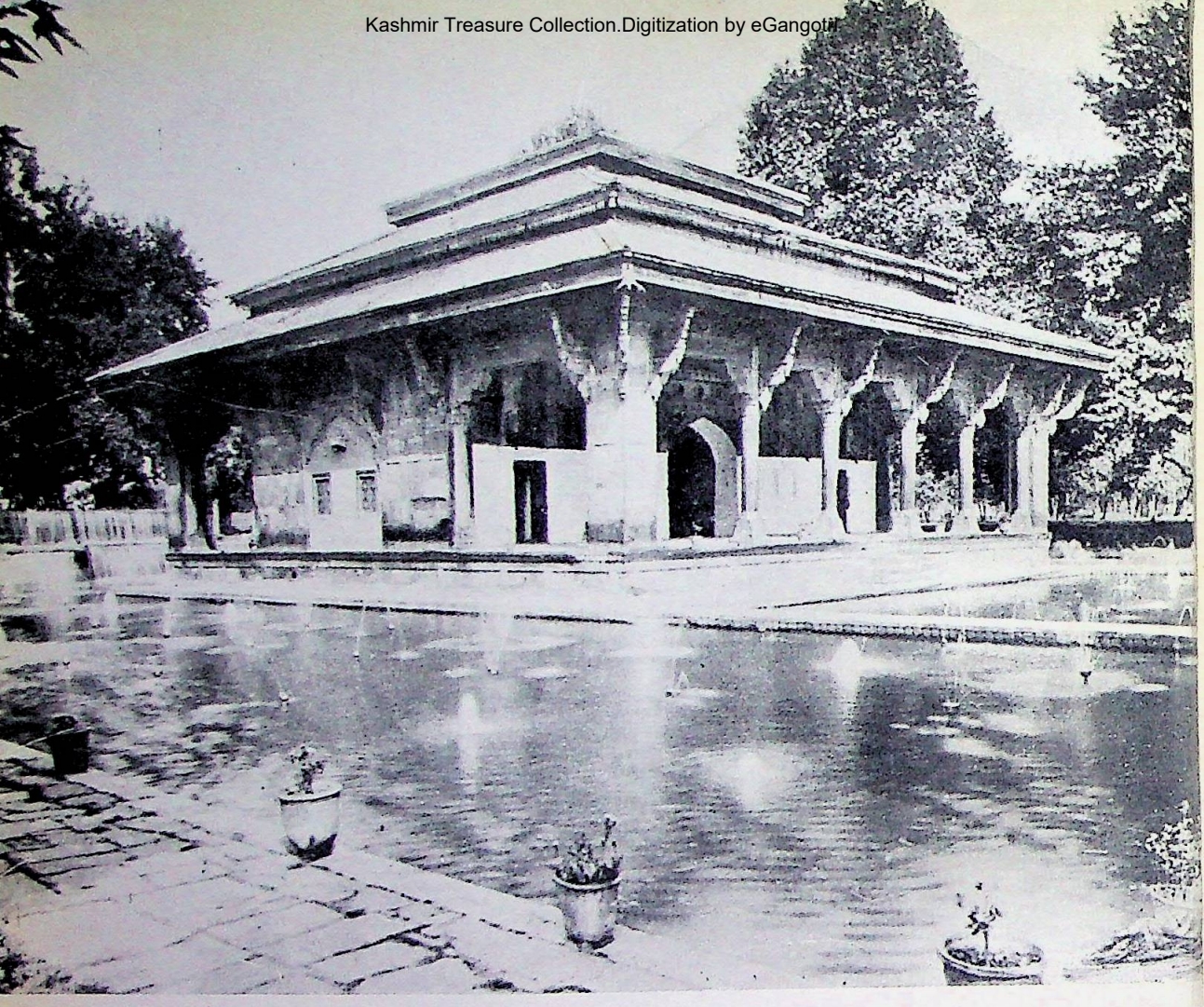

Black Marble pavilion in the midst of fountains

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Nishat Bagh

Nishat Bagh, "the "Pleasure Garden" some two and a half miles away from *Chashma-i-Shahi* on the same road, was laid by Asaf Khan, brother of Empress Nur Jahan. Mrs. Villiers-Stuart, in her *Gardens of the Great Mughals* says : "Its twelve terraces, one for each sign of the Zodiac, rise dramatically high and higher up the mountain-side from the eastern shore of the lake. The stream tears framing down the carved cascades, and fountains play in every tank and water-courses, filling the garden with their joyous life and movement. The flower beds on these sunny terraces blaze with colour ... Beautiful at all times, when autumn lights up the populars in clear gold and the big chinars burn red, more breathlessly

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entrancing sights than this first view of Asaf Khan's "Garden of Pleasure".

The lowest terrace, which touched the waters of the Dal Lake has been cut off by the modern circular road, as it has similarly done so in the *Shalimar* Garden.

The most gaudily painted *barahdari* or Pavilion on the third terrace was introduced by Wazir Pannu, Governor of Kashmir, in the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who took special interest to restore the principal Mughal Gardens to their original pristine glory.

The second terrace, with its lilacs, its high, broad and perpendicular cascades of sparkling water behind which flickering lights of rows and lamps, burning in small arched niches, illumine the spectacle at night, and shining pansy beds, is the most splendid, the most romantic, the most aromatic and the most enchanting section in the garden.

The long series of open terraces rising higher and higher end in the eleventh at the top terminus of the walled garden. A broad water course, which on Sundays and on other occasions turns into a bounteous stream with a large array of splashing fountains in its stone-dressed courses and large tanks, bifurcates each terrace. Huge beautifully dressed and polished monolithic marble thrones, with sides carved in lotus designs, are raised over the water course at intervals. These serve as seats for the visitors. The tanks in the eleventh terrace is the

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The first Baradhari of Nishat Garden facing the Dal Lake

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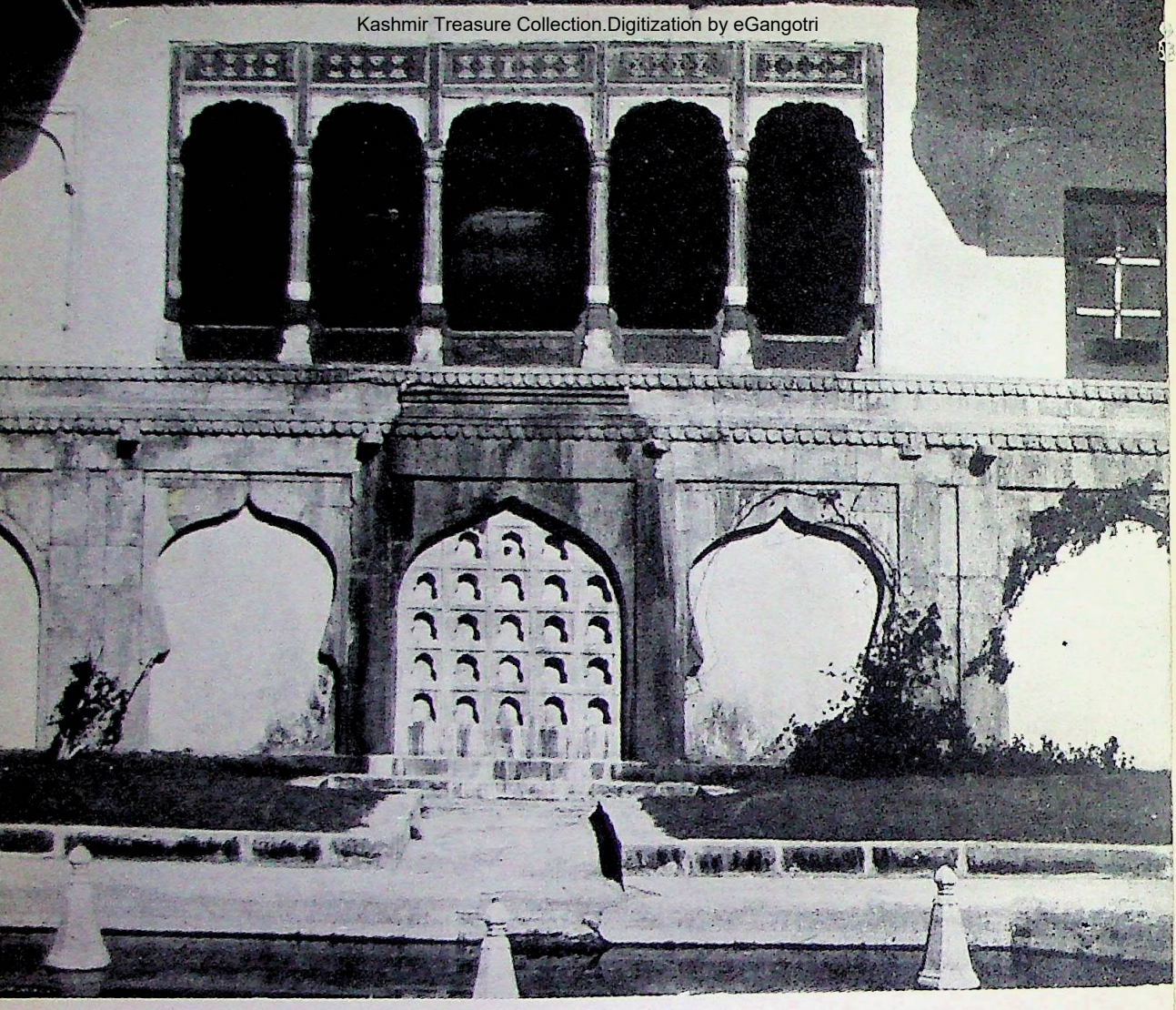

View of the pavilion in the second terrace

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largest with 25 fountains, beyond which is the secluded *Zanana* enclosure with a low parapet wall screening it from the rest of the garden. Flower bordered walls, run down or up on both sides of the stream.

On his first visit to the garden, probably in 1633, Jehangir was wonder struck at the uncanny beauty of the Garden, which, he considered surpassed his *Shalimar* Garden in aesthetic charm and setting, and expecting it to be presented to him on a platter, he thrice repeated his admiration to its owner. But Asaf Khan was not to hand it over and kept silent. The King in a huff ordered the stream of water to be cut off. Shorn of the water supply, the garden lost all its charm and so Asaf Khan grew despondent. Sleeping in one of his pavilions on an occasion he suddenly got up on hearing the water rushing down the cascades and learnt that one of his servants had reconnected the stream on his own. The matter on being reported to the Emperor in the other garden, he not only rewarded the servant for his devotion to his master, but also decreed the continuation of the stream water for the *Nishat Bagh*.

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Shalimar Garden

Two miles away to the north from *Nishat Bagh* lies *Shalimar* on the same road. It was laid out by Emperor Jehangir in 1619 for his and his Queen Nur Jahan's summer residence. It has since then lost most of its original charm, splendeur and even structural character. Francois Bernier, who visited the place in 1664 A.D. in the wake of Aurangzeb, gives a short description of Shalimar as it stood in the Mughal times. "The most beautiful of all these gardens is one belonging to the King called *Chah-limar*. The entrance from the lake is through a spacious canal bordered with green turf and running between two rows of populars. The length is about 500 paces, and it leads to a large summer house placed in the middle of the garden. A second canal, still finer than the first, conducts to another summer house at the end of the garden. The canal is paved with large blocks of stone and its sloping sides are covered with the same. In the middle is

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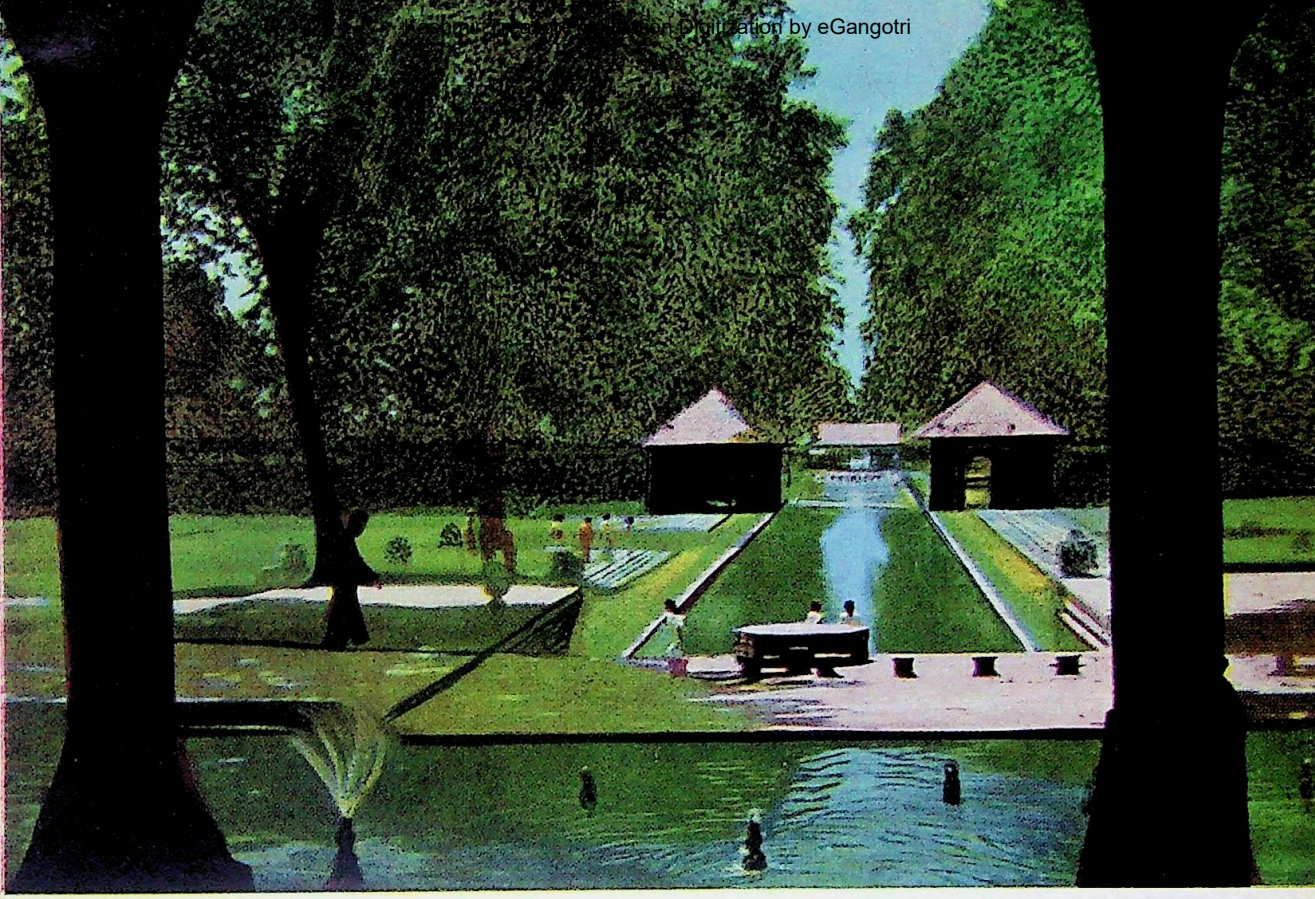

General view of Shalimar Garden from inside

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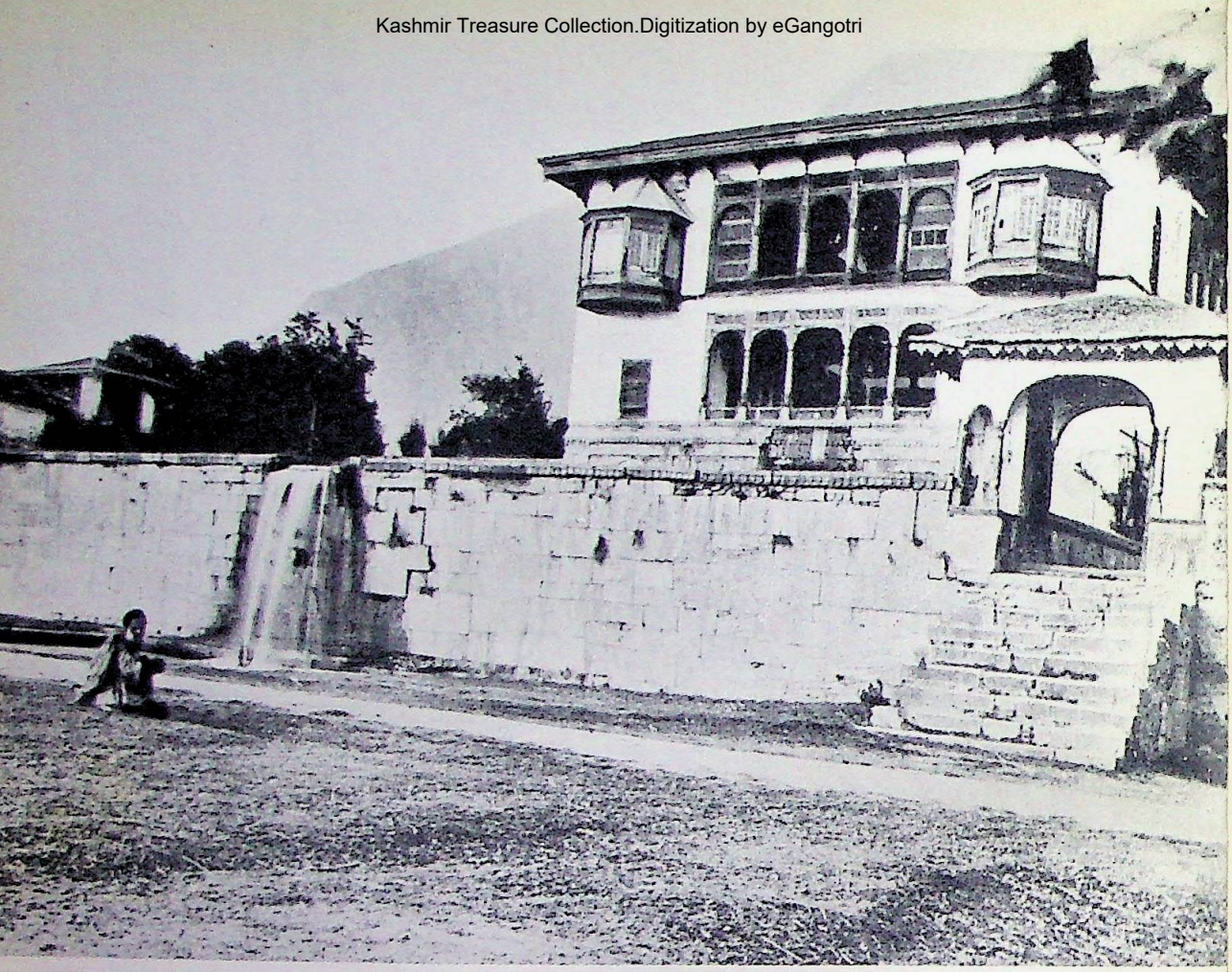

Front view of Nishat Garden

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a long row of fountains, fifteen paces apart; besides which there are here and there large circular basins or reservoirs out of which arise other fountains, formed into a variety of shapes and figures.

"The summer houses are placed in the midst of the canal, consequently surrounded by water and between the two rows of large populars planted on either side. They are built in the form of a dome, and encircled by a gallery, into which four doors open; two looking up or down the canal and two leading to bridges that connected the buildings with both banks. The houses consist of a large room in the centre with four smaller apartments, one at each corner. The whole of the interior is painted and gilt, and on the walls of all the chambers are inscribed certain sentences written in large and beautiful Persian characters.

The four doors are extremely valuable, being composed of large stones aud supported by two beautiful pillars. The doors and pillars were found in some of the idol temples demolished by Shah Jahan and it is impossible to estimate their value. I cannot describe the nature of the stone, but it is far superior to porphyroy or any species of marble".

Much of this splendeur has perished. The stone doors have gone, domes given place to common *shingle* roof; gilt and paint and written pieces all white-washed over and the buildings in the second terrace destroyed by time leaving

Kashmir Treasure Collection.Digitization by eGangotri

behind carved stone bases and a fine platform encircled by fountains.

Shalimar has four terraces on a comparatively level piece of ground, giving rather gliding motion to its water-courses and a soft gloom and a feminine look to its panorama. Originally, as now also, it formed of these enclosures. The outmost enclosure was a public garden and its *barahdari*, or stone pavilion served the purpose of the *Diwan-i-Aam*. The marble throne, where the Emperor gave public audience, still stands over the water fall in the centre of the canal.

The garden in the second enclosure, consisting of two terraces, is broader with *Diwan-i-Khas* pavilion in the centre, which is now no more. To the northern perephery of the enclosure stand the ruins of the royal bath.

In the third garden, the pride of place is taken by the beautiful black marble pavilion, "which still stands in the midst of its fountain spray; the green glitter of the water shining, polished marble, the deep rich tone of which is repeated in the old cypress trees. Round this *barahdari* the whole colour and perfume of the garden is concentrated, with the snows of Mount Mahadev for a background." Mrs. Villiers Stuart repeats : "This unique pavilion is surrounded on every side by a series of cascades, and at night when the lamps are lighted in the little arched recesses behind the shining waterfalls it is even more fairy-like than by day."

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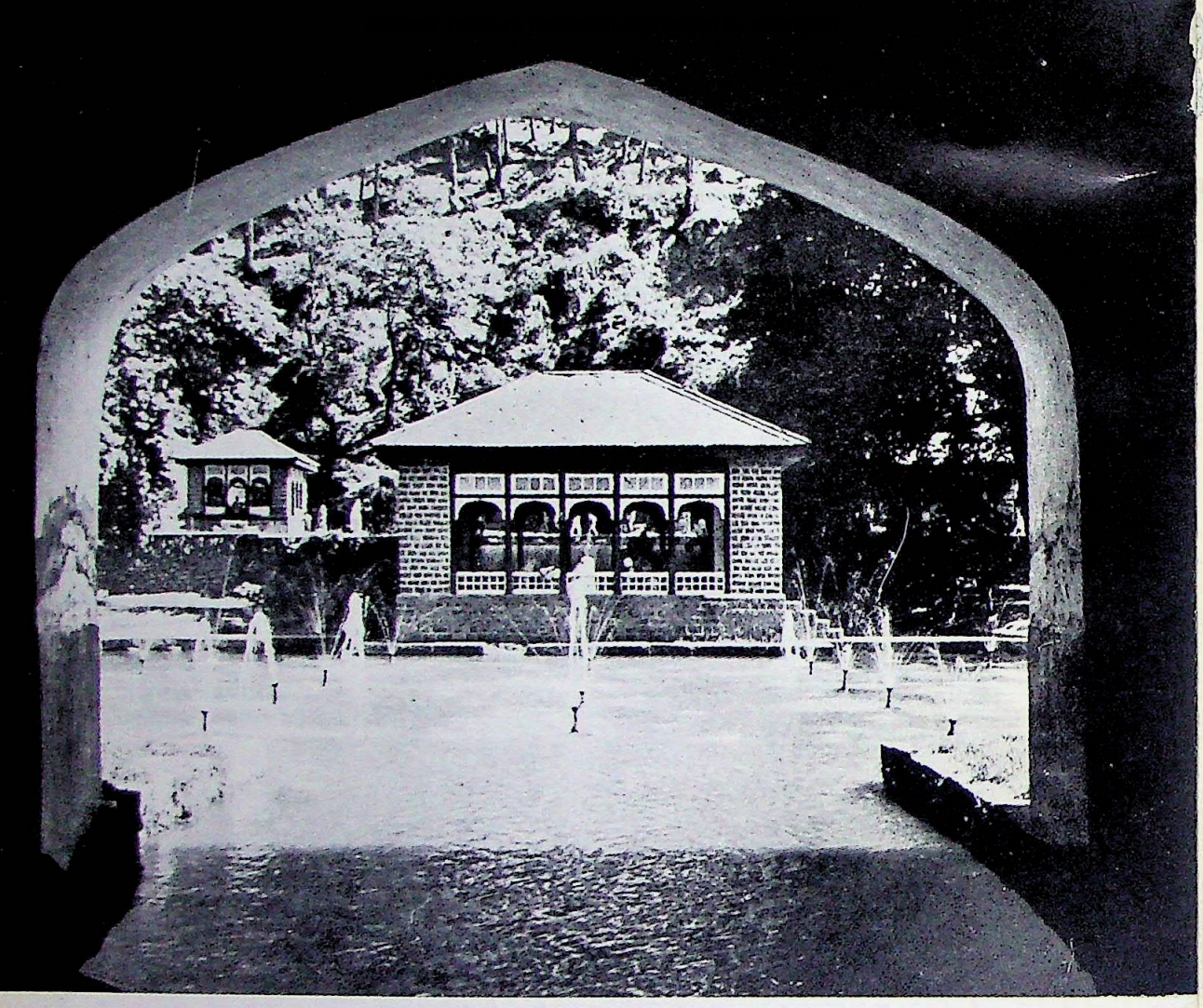
Close up of the main pavilion



Achhabal spring and garden

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Achhabal Spring and Garden

Achhabal, seven miles from Anantnag, was one of the old pleasure-gardens of Jehangir, which according to the Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazal is "a fountain which shoots up to the height of a cubit, and is scarce equalled for its coolness, timpidity and refreshing qualities. The sick that drink of it and persevere in a course of its waters, recover their health."

Though the garden has much changed since its inception by additions and alterations and repairs, its character as it stood in the Mughal times, is best described by Bernier, who visited it in 1665. Relevant portions, which apply to the garden even today, are only noted here.

"Returning from Send-bray (i.e. Trishan-

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dhyan) I turned from the high road for the sake of visiting *Achiavel*, a country house formerly of the Kings of *Kachemire* and now of the great Mughal. What principally constitutes the beauty of this place is a fountain whose waters disperse themselves into a hundred canals round the house, which is by no means unseemly, and throughout the gardens. The spring gushes out of the earth with violence, as if it issued from the bottom of some well, and the water is so abundant that it might rather be called river than a fountain. It is excellent water and cold as ice. The garden is very handsome, laid out in regular walks and full of fruit trees . . . jets d'ean in various forms and fish-ponds are in great numbers and there is a lofty cascade which in its fall takes the form and colour of a large sheet, thirty or forty paces in length, producing the finest effect imaginable, specially at night, when innumerable lamps, fixed in parts of the wall adapted for that purpose, are lighted under this sheet of water." This last feature is seldom provided now, except on some festive occasion.

Original watercourse is still in tact, and the foundations of its row of fountains are still there. Most of the *Barahdaris* and pavilions were added during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, but ruins of some others belong to the Mughal times. All falls here are vertical and more sloping. Royal quarters were to the west.

There are now "trout-culture" ponds or piscina on the othdr side of the Spring.

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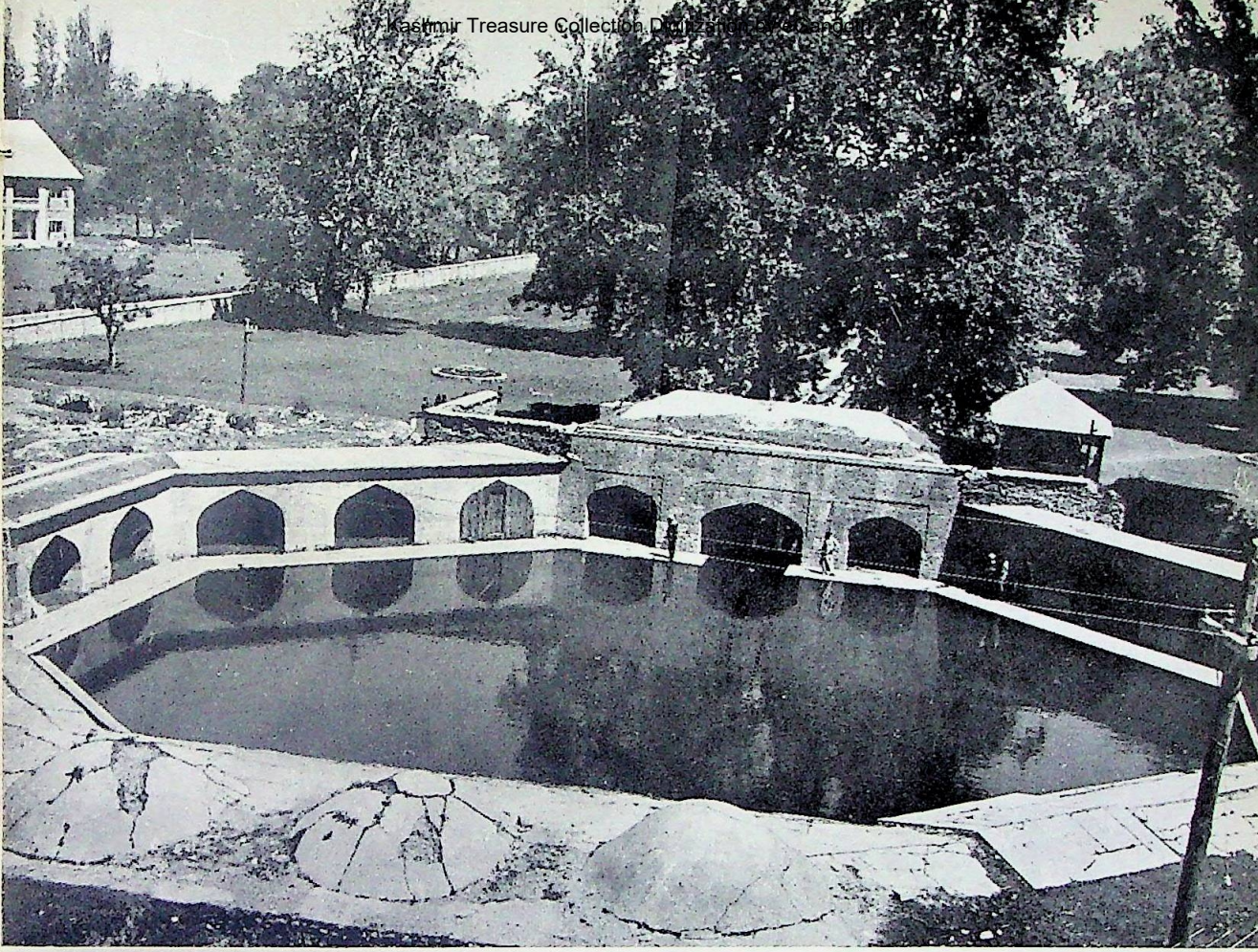

Verinag—the source of Jhelum river

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Figure of Vishnu excavated near Verinag

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Verinag

Verinag (6100 ft.) just at the foot of the old Baninhal Pass (9763ft.) is 17 miles from Achhabel. Here is the main source of the Jhelum river, which rises in the octagonal tank, called in ancient times Nila-Naga associated with a tradition recorded in the *Nilamata Purana*, and was a place of Hindu pilgrimage up to the time of Akbar, when it had already assumed the present name, Verinag, from the district in which it is located. About it Abul Fazal writes: "It is a pool measuring a *jarib*, which tosses in foam with an astonishing roar, and its depth is unfathomable, and is surrounded by a stone embankment . . ."

Emperor Jehangir started building its octagonal basin and its surrounding arcade, both of

Kashmir Treasure Collection.Digitization by eGangotri

which were concluded in the time of Shah Jahan. Jehangir in his memoirs says, "After my accession, I ordered them to build the sides of the Spring with stone, and they made a garden round it with a canal and built halls and houses about it and made a place such that travellers over the world can point out few like it." Of all the structural works done in the Mughal times, only the group of 24 arches round the spring have remained in tact to a great extent. Originally built of stone, the walls were surmounted by a series of finely sculptured brackets supporting the eaves. Most of these are still existent. Repairs of some and reconstruction of others in brick masonry were effected by Wazir Punnu in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's time. Two inscribed stone tablets—one of Jehangir and the other of Shah Jahan are fixed into the wall of the arcade. The last lines in these inscription yield the dates of construction and finish as A.H. 1029, A.D. 1619—20 and A.H. 1036—A.D. 1626-27.

The stream, flowing from the Spring, is 12 ft. wide and runs throughout the length of the garden and is spanned at places by *Barahdaris.*

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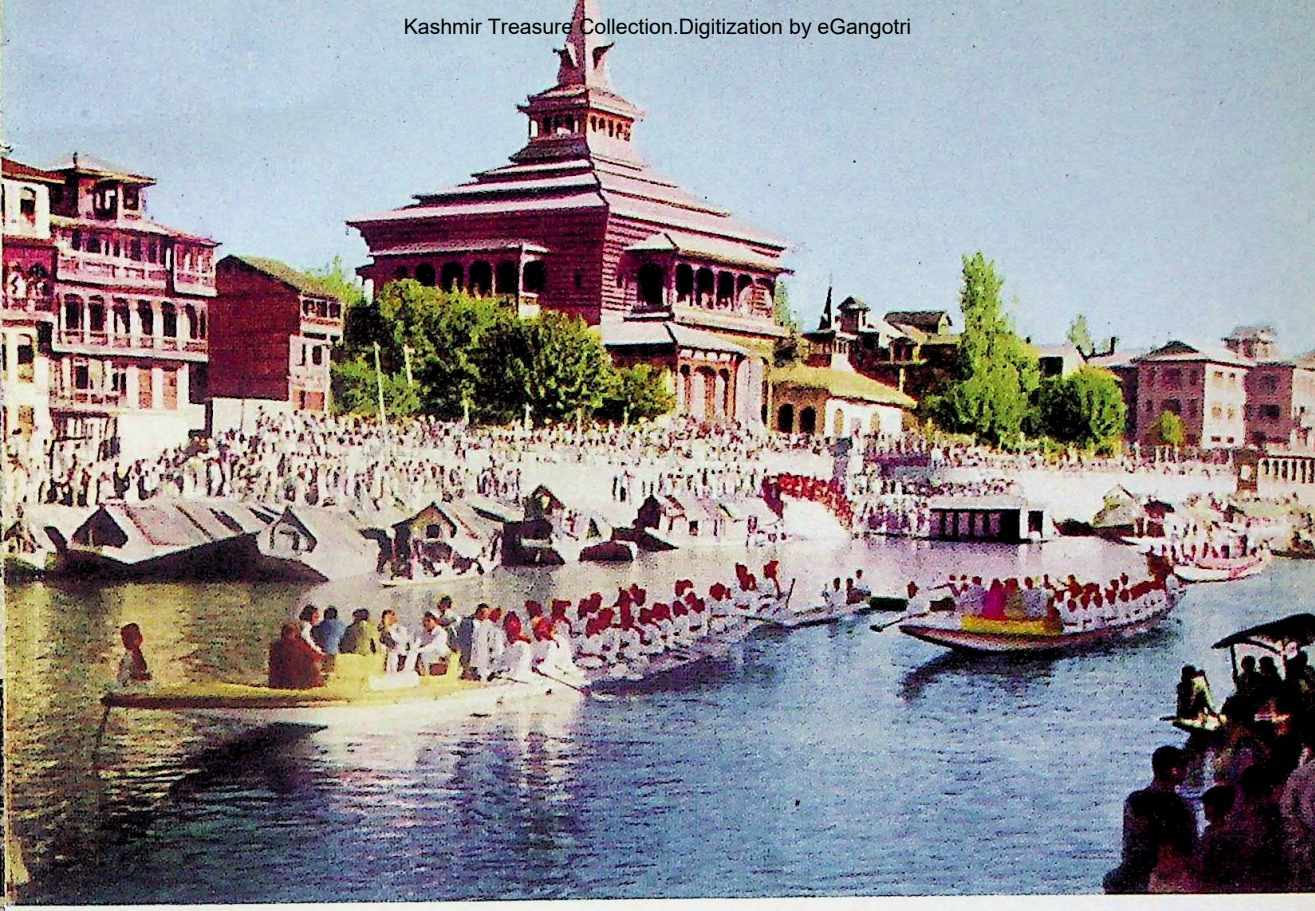

Mosque of Shah Hamdan on river Jhelum

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Close up view of Shah Hamdan Mosque

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MOSQUES AND MAUSOLEUMS

Khanqah Shah Hamadan

Between the old 3rd and 4th bridges on the right bank of the Jhelum river, stands the wooden edifice dedicated, as *Khanqah* to the memory of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani, a Muslim saint of Hamadan in Persia.

When the mosque was built is rather uncertain, but it was mentioned by Baron Von Hugel, who visited Kashmir in 1835, as a modern looking building. The Ain-i-Akbari of Abul Fazal mentions the saint having lived in Srinagar and having founded there a monastery called after his name.

The structure is for the most part made of squared timber slabs inter-spersed with finely gap-fillers Some of the doors and windows show wood carving of super-quality.

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The *Khanqah* of Shah Hamdan is a rectangular mosque with a domed roof. The large hall inside, measures 63 by 43 ft. and is flanked on the south and north side by 14 other chambers. The one on the north-west corner has the tomb of the Saint. Walls inside the hall are decorated with panelled wood-work gone brown with age. Dado is decorated with carved floral designs. In some panels on the wall are carved the names of God painted in gold. The tomb chamber is decorated with glass and glazed work. Four wooden columns, supporting the ceiling, are decorated with painted wooden chips arranged in fish bone pattern in the shafts, carved with lotus motifs at the base and leaf patterns, at the capitals, which are 16 sided. The date of 786 Hijra (1384 A.D.), when the saint died, is carved on the doorway of the shrine.

According to Fergusson, the mosque of Shah Hamadan, though small, "is interesting, in the first place, because its roof is probably very similar to that which once covered the temple at Martand, and the crowning ornament is evidiently a reminiscence of a Buddhist Tree (*the umbrella-shaped finial of a dagoba*) very much altered, it must be confessed, but still not so very unlike some found in Nepal, as at *Swayambunath*, for instance and elsewhere".

"The walls, too, are of interest to us, because the mode in which the logs are disposed and ornamented resembled the ornamentation of the Orissan temples, more clearly than any stone forms we can call to mind."

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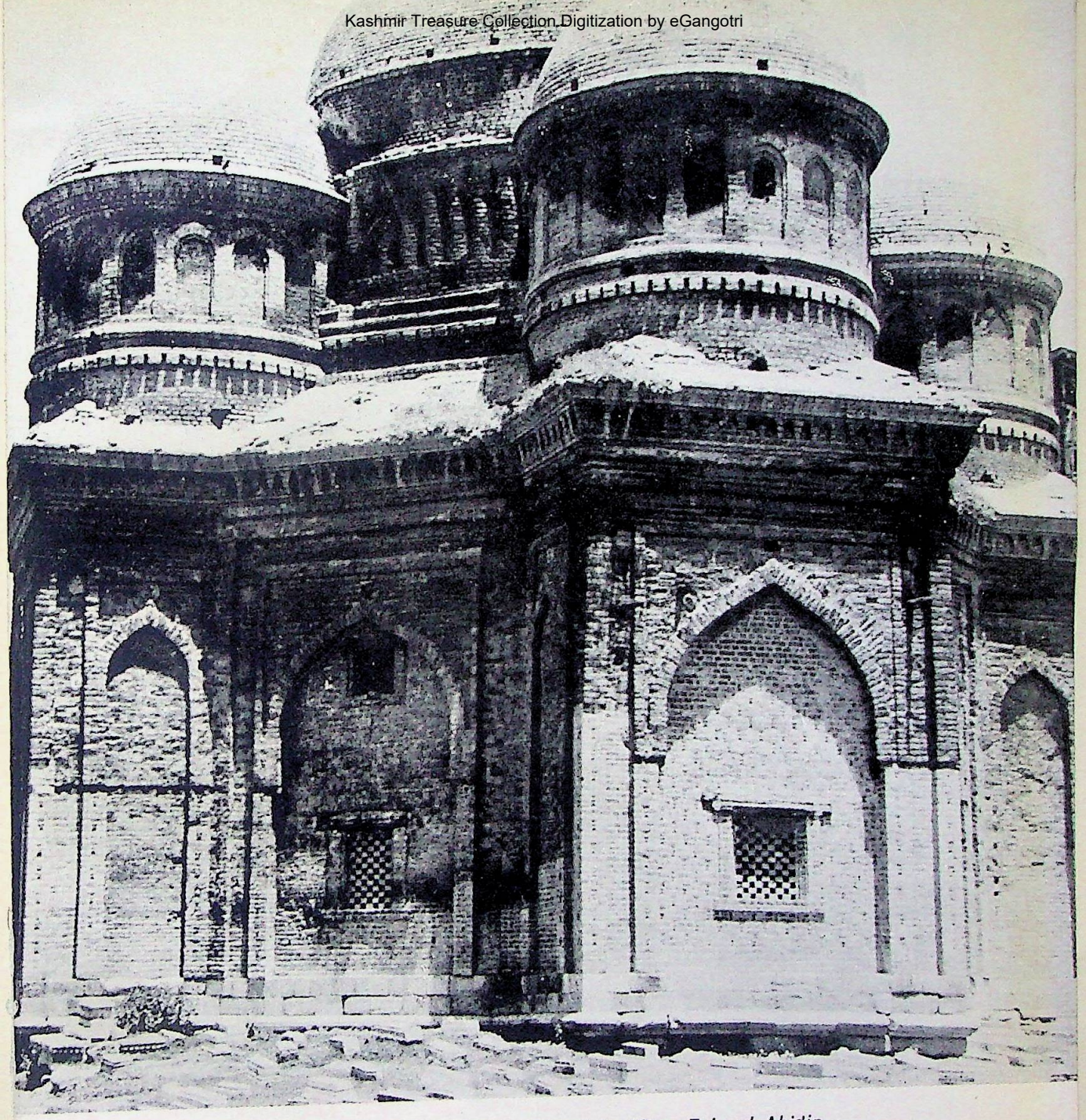

Badshah—the massive domed mausoleum built by King Zain-ul-Abidin

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The *Khanqah* of Shah Hamdan is a rectangular mosque with a domed roof. The large hall inside, measures 63 by 43 ft. and is flanked on the south and north side by 14 other chambers. The one on the north-west corner has the tomb of the Saint. Walls inside the hall are decorated with panelled wood-work gone brown with age. Dado is decorated with carved floral designs. In some panels on the wall are carved the names of God painted in gold. The tomb chamber is decorated with glass and glazed work. Four wooden columns, supporting the ceiling, are decorated with painted wooden chips arranged in fish bone pattern in the shafts, carved with lotus motifs at the base and leaf patterns, at the capitals, which are 16 sided. The date of 786 Hijra (1384 A.D.), when the saint died, is carved on the doorway of the shrine.

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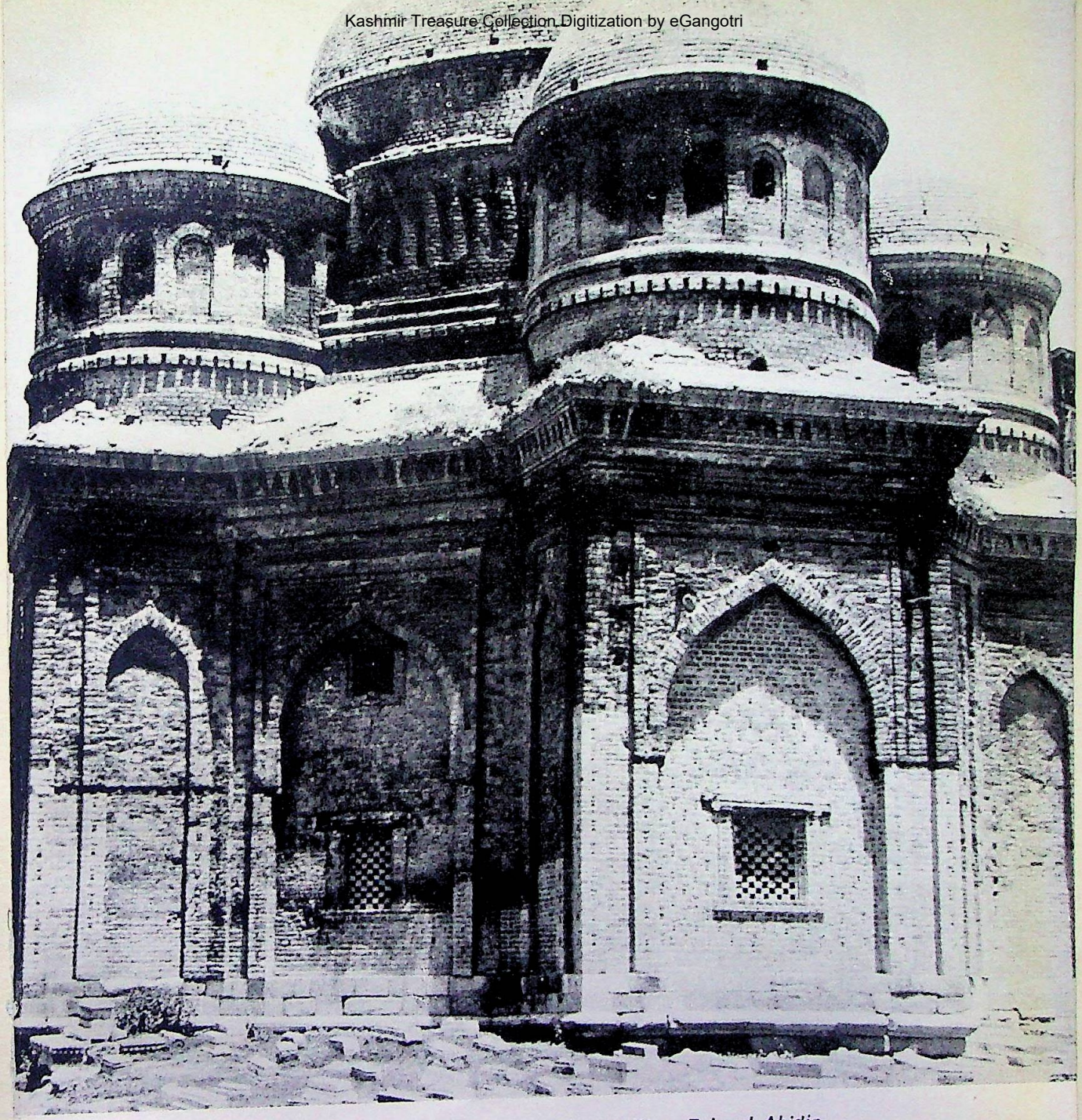

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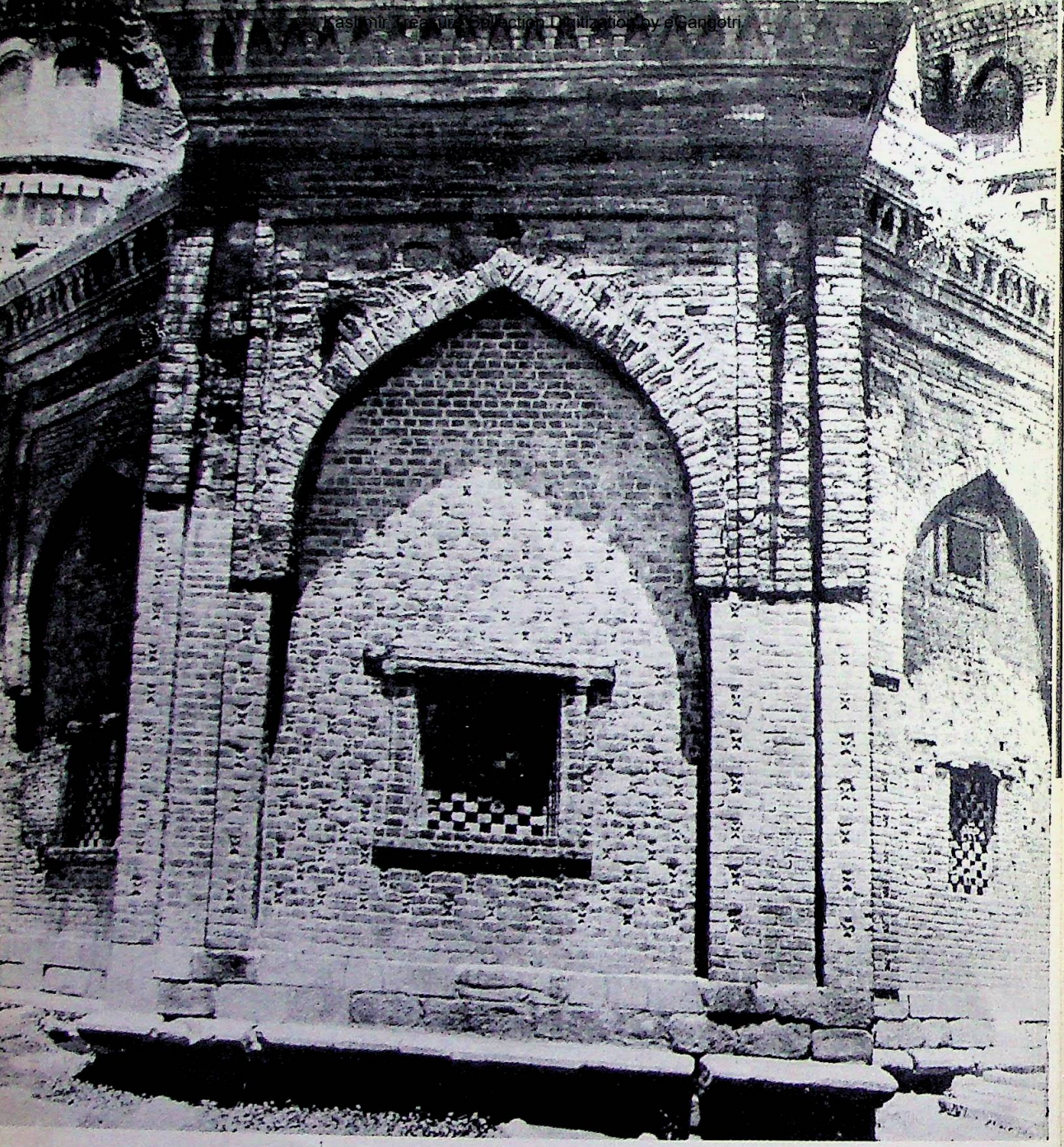

Detail of the outside wall

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Badshah or Tomb of Zain-ul-Abidin's Mother

Between the old Fourth and Fifth bridges near Sri Ranbirganj Bazar, is the high and massive domed mausoleum built by Zain-ul-Abidin (1421-1772 A.D.) entombing the mortal remains of his mother. He was also called Bad-Shah—the great King and the name has stuck to the tomb site afterwards. Here only the super-structure on a square plan, consisting of the single chamber in the middle with projected recesses at the angles, was built by the King. The plinth with its gileted torus cornice as well as the tre-foiled entrance with its massive jambs belong to an old Hindu temple. The domes have been raised on moulded string courses. The drum of

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the central dome is decorated with semi-circular cupolas with sunk or ground panels. The exterior walls are studded with glazed and moulded blue bricks by way of decoration.

The tomb of Bad-Shah himself is one of the many tombs in a stone enclosure with a gateway. This stone enclosure really belonged to the old desecrated Hindu temple as was guessed by Cunningham and Cole by personal inspection who ascribed the temple to the 4th or 5th century A.D. Though other evidences available at the spot assign it to the 9th century. Fergusson has asserted that the tomb was wholly built by Zain-ul-Abidin and there was no borrowing from any Hindu temple. All these structures are enclosed by a big massive stone wall with a ridged coping having two entrance gates, one on the road side and the other opening towards the river. This enclosed site was later on used as a cemetery by some Muslim nobility of the place.

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Patthar Masjid

Against the wooden mosque of Shah Hamadan and just on the opposite bank of the river, stands the stone mosque of polished grey limestone, locally called *Patthar Masjid*, built in Mughal style, in 1623 A.D. at the behest of Empress Nur Jahan. Soon after its completion, the *mullas* of Kashmir declared the mosque unfit for religious use, and since then it remained isolated and now a preserved monument.

It is the largest surviving example of fine Mughal architecture in Kashmir. There are no less than nine horizontally constructed arches in the facade, the middle one being the largest arched portico. The visible coping stones of the now almost underground plinth have a series of

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large lotus leaves carved in relief, and so have the portion of the walls between the projecting cornice and the eaves, some of which are also pierced. Over sloping Kashmiri styled roof rise 27 domes, the central one being the largest, almost ribbed inside, though some are flat and some barrel-vaulted. The roof from inside is supported on 18 massive square columns, the lower part of which is built of stone and the upper of the brick masonary projecting sideways in cusped arches. The bricky part is thickly plastered with buff coloured lime mortar which also covers the enclosing brick wall.

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Jama Masjid

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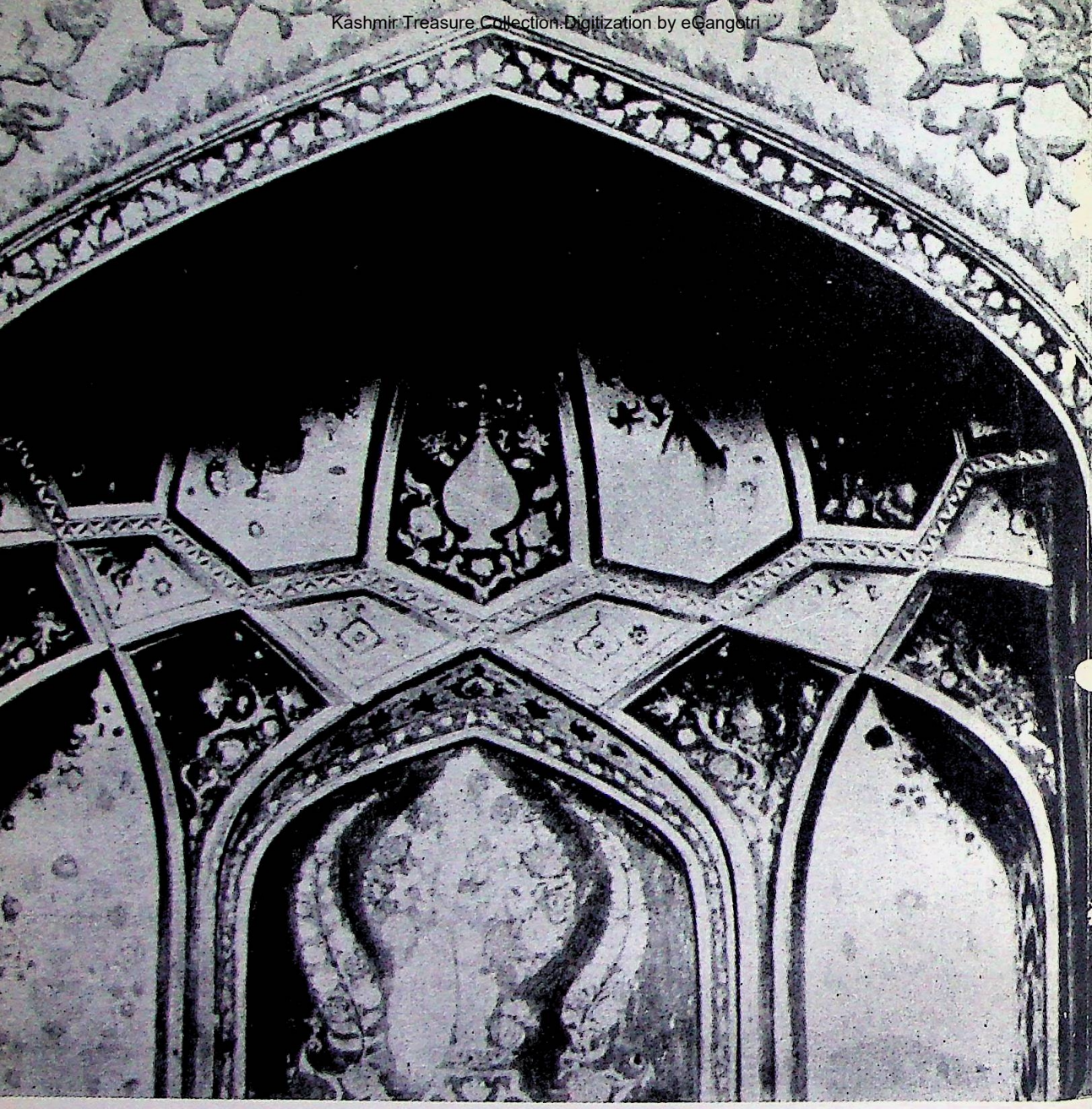

Painting patterns decorating the interior wall surfaces

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Jama Masjid

Jama Masjid, in the central part of the eastern sector of the city near the *Mar Canal*, was originally built by Sikandar Butshikan in 1398-1402. It was embellished after him by his illustrious son, Zain-ul-Abidin. In 1479 it was consumed by a conflagration, and was re-erected and completed in 1503 but fell victim to fire again in 1720, in the reign of Jehangir, who immediately ordered its reconstruction and got it completed in 17 years. On the Southern gateway is an inscription giving the history of the mosque to that date, and on its right wall is a block of black marble on which is engraved the royal *Farman* or decree of the Emperor Shah Jahan, directing the remission of all the cruel exactions levied by Itaqad Khan, the provincial

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Governor, whom he also dismissed and replaced by Zafar Khan. In 1674, in the time of Aurangzeb, the mosque for the third time got destroyed by fire. The emperor, however, got it rebuilt in three years' time. Thereafter, it fell into disuse and decay till its reconstruction re-started in 1913 and completed under the aegis of the late Maharaja Pratap Singh and with substantial government aid and supervision.

The mosque is a cloistered colonnaded structure of huge dimensions round a rectangular courtyard which is roughly square in plan, its one side being 386 feet and the other side a few feet in length. In the middle of each side rises a minar on a plain but imposing arched entrance connected with the spacious halls on its flanks except on the Western side where pulpit stands. The minars are covered by a series of pyramidal roofs upon which stands a pavilion-typed open turret which is crowned by a high pinnacle coped by the usual umbrella shaped finial like the one on the Shah Hamadan Mosque. The roof of each minar is supported on eight columns of deodar pine, each 50 feet in height and over 6 ft. in girth. The roofs of the surrounding cloistered halls are also supported on 378 similar deodar wood columns in the usual colonnaded fashion. All these columns are plain and unadorned and stand on the original square limestone bases. Under the minar on the Western side is the pulpit in an arcade recess instead of the entrance.

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Mosque and Tomb of Madin Sahib

Some four to five miles to the north of Srinagar, the area from Zadibal to Vitsarnag, is full of ancient buildings. The prominent among such structures is the mosuqe of Madin *Sahib* at Zadibal, which is a pre-Mughal structure in Kashmir.

Its square base is exactly a transplantation of a plinth of a mediaeval temple including the arrangement of courses. The four walls of the square structure have trefoiled brick niches on their faces, ogee shaped on the doorway and pointed on others. The capitals on pilasters are just like those in a Hindu temple as are also the entablature over the arches adorned with beautiful

Kashmir Treasure Collection.Digitization by eGangotri

tracery work. Below the eaves the cornice are made of wooden courses, which at places have delicate carving. The roof is pyramidal with a spiral apex. The entrance to the prayer chambers is through an elaborately carved wooden doorway flanked by two fluted stone columns. The prayer chamber inside has *Khatam-band* ceiling (i.e., thin peices of soft wood woven into geometrical pattern), supported on four multi-sided wooden columns.

The tomb of the saint is to the north of the mosque. Its walls were originally decorated with glazed tiles, most of which are missing. A few remaining ones have been preserved in the Srinagar Museum. This shows that in the pre-Mughal Muslim architecture, work of mosaic pattern decorated with floral, animal, human designs and mythical creatures, were used.

The mosque and the tomb were built in 1483 A.D. in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin.

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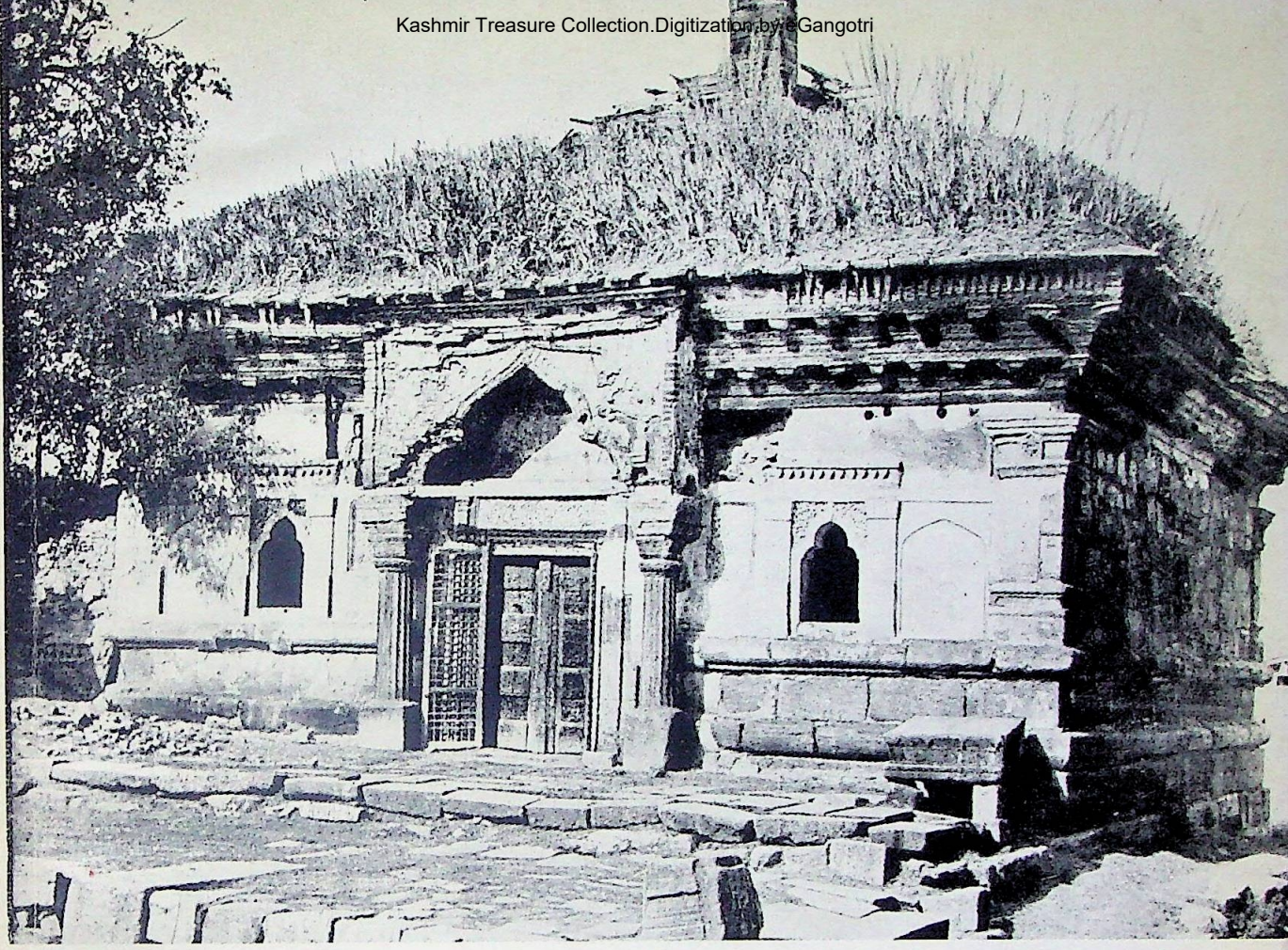

Mosque of Madin Sahib

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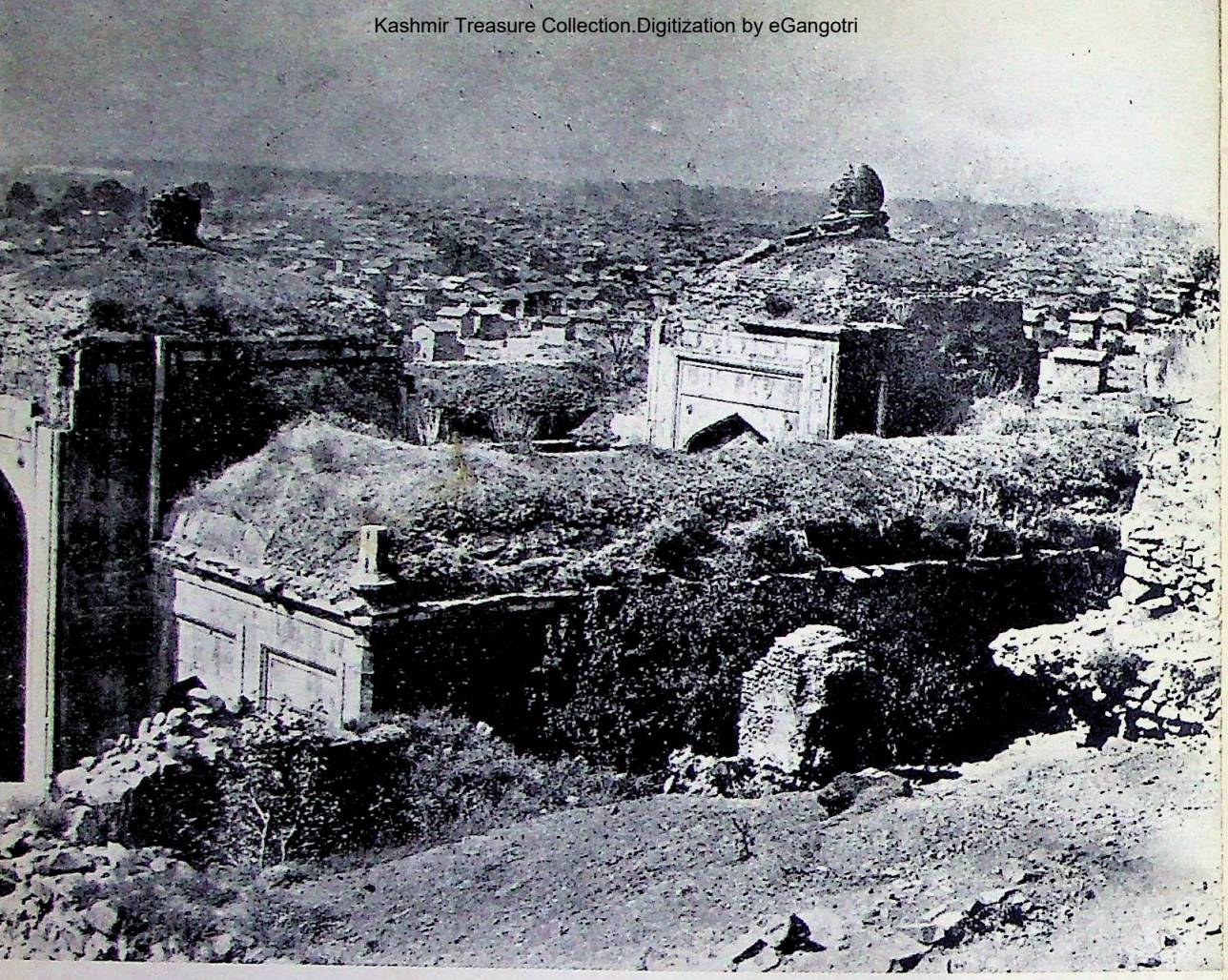

Mosque of Akhun Mullah Shah

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Mosque of Akhun Mullah Shah

The Mosque of Akhun Mullah Shah is just below the shrine of Makhdum Sahib. It was built by Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, for the use of his tutor, Akhun Mullah Shah. This small mosque is made of highly polished beautiful grey limestone. The mosque is the only surviving example in Kashmir which has in tact the stone lotus finial over the pulpit. The facade has no decorations except the rectangular panels around the cusped arches. Its plan is rather singular. The small prayer hall, where pulpit stands, is flanked by two such chambers which are rather arcades on the two sides, while a similar arcaded chamber projected on the front serves as the gateway. Ruins of the arched halls on a lower level show them as lodgings for pilgrims. A *Hammam*, bath, is a little further off, and has an inscription on the lintel of its doorway, giving in the chronogram of the last line the year Hijra, 1059 (1649 A.D.) as the date of the construction of the mosque and the *hammam*.

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